

THE CONSEQUENCES OF AUTHENTICITY AND IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT IN THE
CONTEXT OF TABOO CONVERSATIONS

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ABSTRACT

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The current study integrates the construct of taboo into the organizational literature by considering its impact on coworker relationships, particularly in the context of authenticity and impression management. To explore how taboo topics may intrude on positive employee relationships, I consider its potential to impact helping behaviors in the workplace. An online between-subjects experiment manipulates motivation to be authentic or impression manage and a topic of discussion with a coworker to be taboo (e.g. abortion) or neutral (e.g. fitness). I evaluated participants' perceptions of their own motivation, participant's perceptions of their behavior during the interaction as authentic or impression management, and helping behaviors following the interaction. Results showed that motivation, but not taboo topics, influenced perceptions of behavior during the interaction. Further, taboo topics and the behavior during the interaction did not influence subsequent helping behaviors. However, exploratory results showed that taboo topics did impact affect towards the coworker that brought up the taboo topic.

Limitations, implications for theory and practice, and future research directions are discussed.

Keywords: taboo, authenticity, impression management, helping behaviors

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INTRODUCTION

Authenticity has become a buzz word in practice and in science. Kernis (2003) defines authenticity as “the unobstructed operation of one's true, or core, self in one's daily enterprise”. In practice, organizations large and small such as OfficeMax (Brooks, 2013), and TopGolf (Douglas, 2013) are encouraging their workers to be their authentic selves by “bringing their whole self to work” as a part of their company culture. Others are leading by example with a similar but not as explicit message. Apple’s CEO Tim Cook, for example, released a press statement to reveal his sexuality, becoming the first openly gay CEO in the Fortune 500 and making very clear his commitment to employees’ right to be themselves, despite their differences (Cook, 2014; Eyl, 2014). Books (Ferdman, & Roberts, 2014; Inam, 2015; Robbins, 2009), blog posts or online articles (Croswell, 2016; Eyl, 2013; Workopolis, 2017), and other sources (Robbins, 2015; Robotham, 2015) are dedicated to teaching employees and employers how to be authentic or create authentic workplaces.

In science, researchers are publishing more findings about the benefits of authenticity. A search for the term “authenticity at work” turns up 117 articles after 2010 and only 68 from 1930-2009. Psychologist first studied the concept of authenticity in relation to well-being (Goldman & Kernis, 2002). Organizational research studies outcomes such as performance, employee self-efficacy, and job satisfaction in relation to authenticity (Knoll, Meyer, Kroemer, Schroder-Abe, 2015; Leroy, Anseel, Gardner, & Sels, 2015; Metin, Taris, Peeters, van Beek, & van den Bosch & Taris, 2014). However, the research in this area focuses exclusively on the individual experience of “feeling” that you have behaved authentically. Authenticity has been incorporated into organizational culture but there has not been research to show its effect.

Organizations may be sending mixed signals to employees that are encouraged to be themselves yet are actively discouraged from talking about certain topics by Human Resources professionals (e.g. Durre, 2010; Stevens, 2013) and popular press (e.g. Lieberman, n.d.; Perkins, 2015; West, 2014). For years, the colloquial advice for professional behavior has been to avoid talking about politics, religion, and sexual relationships in the workplace if it is not job relevant (Glassdoor Team, 2012). Watercooler conversations, or the non-work-related interactions around the (sometimes proverbial) watercooler, are meant to be polite and show comradery, deeming only certain topics appropriate for the workplace. Per the Merriam-Webster definition, taboo is defined as something banned on grounds of morality and taste (Taboo: Merriam Webster, n.d.). In the workplace, topics that are deemed inappropriate because they are seemingly divisive or incendiary are referred to as taboo. Example taboo subjects include politics, religion, sexual relationships, financial statuses, and recreational drug or alcohol use. Taboo topics in the workplace have the potential to ruin the professional image of an employee by exposing too much non-work-related information about a lifestyle or inciting controversy over sensitive topics. However, many of these taboo topics may align with core aspects of identity and, therefore, be necessary to express when “being authentic”. On the contrary, avoiding taboo in favor of strategically presenting a professional identity is more aligned with impression management in the organizational literature.

Impression management can be defined as degrees of surface acting or image construction for the purpose of maintaining a positive professional image (Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Roberts, 2005). Employees are encouraged to opt for impression management strategies when confronted with taboo conversations (Choi, 2017; Durre, 2010); however, the culture of authenticity and bringing your whole self to work may create an environment that welcomes

topics previously deemed as taboo. These two competing frameworks may influence employee perceptions and expression of taboo topics differently. For example, the recent attention to political talk in the workplace highlights how the shift towards authenticity may be detrimental for the workplace when taboo topics are welcomed. Research reports about the workplace after the United States' 2016 presidential election suggests that politics is being talked about in the workplace more than ever before (McGregor, 2017) and additional research shows that there are negative consequences for employees. The American Psychological Association did a survey of over 900 working adults and found that over 25% of workers feel political discussions in the workplace cause at least one negative consequence at work, including being less productive at work (13%) feeling more workplace hostility from coworkers (13%), and decreased team cohesiveness (13%) (American Psychological Association, 2016). Given these negative consequences, authenticity may not be wise to encourage, despite the positive effects researchers find for the individual (e.g. Goldman & Kernis, 2002, Metin, et al., 2014).

While organizational scientists seem to be rapidly gaining an understanding of authenticity, little is understood about taboo interactions and their effect on coworker relationships. This thesis attempts to shed light on these interactions in two ways. First, I attempt to understand how the culture of authenticity and the culture of impression management influence the behavior of employees during taboo conversations. Secondly, I try to understand one of the workplace consequences of taboo experiences. Given that the impact of taboo often begins with relational consequences, this thesis investigates how taboo experiences may influence an employee's willingness to provide help to their coworker.

As the first step to understand taboo topics, this study is bounded with the supposition and hope that future research will establish the specific nuances and situational constraints in

which taboo functions in the workplace. The focus here is on societal taboos in the context of a white collar (i.e. corporate) work environment and its effect on peer relationships. This research is important for several reasons. The first reason is because there is a gap between commonly used themes in practice and the literature in the organizational sciences surrounding authenticity in the workplace. Authenticity has not been studied as a cultural element of an environment (though it can be an element of a leader; Ilies, Morgeson, & Nahrgang, 2005), yet it is encouraged in workplaces. The implications of authenticity as a culture or climate has not yet been established. The literature also has not yet addressed how taboo would fall into authenticity. It is unclear the benefit of authenticity if two employees' "authentic selves" were utterly at odds on a topic such as politics. Despite the contradictory advice to avoid non-work-related conversations about potentially divisive subjects (e.g. Choi, 2017; Lieberman, n.d.; Perkins, 2015; West, 2014), the authenticity literature does not have any strong theoretical understanding about how to engage when these topics do arise between coworkers. This investigation would both expand the authenticity literature by bounding its utility and by integrating a new concept into its domain.

This research is also important because it may contribute to the creation of fluency across the science-practitioner divide regarding evidence-based solutions for taboo in the workplace. Instead of the potentially confusing mixed messages from popular press and organizations (i.e. do not talk about XYZ vs. be your true self in all situations) leading to unwanted conflict in the workplace, an examination of the important characteristics of a taboo interaction may yield practical recommendations for employees to handle (or avoid) sensitive topics on the dyadic level. Identifying those characteristics could also suggest a research stream aimed at best practices for organizations to incorporate authenticity into their culture.

Lastly, the impact of taboo is of importance to researchers and practitioners alike given its potential to influence behavior. Helping behaviors contribute to building positive workplace relationships and coworker relationships are related to vital job outcomes including performance, cohesion, and organizational commitment/job satisfaction (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008; Simon, Judge, & Halvorsen-Ganepola, 2010). To evade or eliminate the possibility of a disturbance in the quality of coworker relationships, a thorough investigation of taboo is warranted. The outcomes of taboo conversations at work should be well understood to prevent any detrimental effects to the workplace.

I will begin this undertaking by giving a more thorough understanding of taboo and how it is distinguishable from other non-work topics of discussion before a brief literature review of impression management and authenticity in relation to taboo. Next, I connect the constructs with helping behavior as a potential outcome and develop hypotheses about the relationship between constructs. To test these hypotheses, I conducted a between-subjects experiment manipulating the motivation to be authentic or impression manage and the experience of a taboo conversation with a coworker. I analyze the results and conclude with a discussion of taboo, authenticity, impression management, and helping behaviors in the workplace.

Taboo Topics in the Workplace

Research in the organizational sciences about the importance of social interactions is plentiful, given its key role for both the individual and the organization. Many constructs considered important for an individual's experience at work include aspects of social relationships such as work motivation, organizational commitment, and turnover (Tschan, Semmer, & Inversin, 2004). Further, many jobs are now structured such that it is nearly impossible not have some social interaction with the growing use of teams and increase in flatter

organizational structures (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008). Some even suggest that social relationships can define the work environment (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008; Schneider, 1987). More specifically, social interactions that are not work related have proven to be instrumental for employees. Non-work social interactions can facilitate coworker relationships, increase perceptions of competence, and provides other job-related benefits such as being recommended to new projects (Lin, & Kwantes, 2015). However, the existing research about the effects of non-work coworker interactions assumes that the interaction is based on neutral or positive topics. For example, Tschan and colleagues (2004) proposed that the basis for having private interactions (as opposed to task-related interactions) is their expected pleasantness. Lin and Kwantes (2015) hypothesized and found that merely engaging in social interactions would increase the liking of a coworker. The content of those social interactions remains unexplored, which assumes that the topic of the conversation is irrelevant and that simply interacting will lead to positive outcomes. Given the research about the negative effects of non-work topics such as politics in the workplace, a more thorough investigation of taboo interactions is warranted to understand why these interactions are different and the consequences for coworker relationships.

Taboo topics have three important components that distinguish them from ordinary topics and make them questionable organizational conversation. The first component is that the topic is associated with deep level values. Values are guiding principles that apply across domains and situations which are expressed in various ways in everyday behavior (Caprara, Schwartz, Capanna, Vecchione, & Barbaranelli, 2006). Koleva and colleagues (2012) suggest that the five universal moral values are harm/care, fairness/reciprocity, ingroup/loyalty, authority/respect, and purity/sanctity. Some of these values are related to widely and publicly debated topics. For example, strong tendencies for ingroup/loyalty relate to negative attitudes towards illegal

immigration and the destruction of patriotic symbols (i.e. burning a flag; Koleva, Graham, Iyer, Ditto, Haidt, 2012). Enacting values by integrating them with identity can provide the satisfaction of psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Values become an essential part of an individual's identity that satisfies their needs and a guide to navigate and understand society (Hunter, 1991; Koleva, et al., 2012). As a primary component of identity and foundation for understanding society, these intrinsic values become paramount to defend (Hunter, 1991; Koleva, et al., 2012). Values are often associated with preferences for political parties, family structures, and religious affiliations due to similar moral foundations that create these preferences (Koleva, et al., 2012). An example of integrating values into identity might include declaring one's self as a Republican or Democrat, joining a social movement, or simply taking sides in an argument. Given that taboo topics often juxtapose moral values, such that they require a "right" answer, these topics become highly divisive and people feel obligated to defend their position on them. They are likely topics that would ignite turmoil if coworkers disagreed on them, especially if they are not given the tools to have respectful conversations (Catalyst, 2016).

The second component of a taboo topic is that they are bound by legal ramifications. Some laws surrounding free conversation or non-work behavior vary by location in the United States or between government and private organizations. Unclear, non-standardized legal consequences create an air of hesitance around the topic of discussion. For example, a survey by the Society for Human Resources Management found that 24% of organizations had formal policies regarding political activity in the workplace and 8% had informal policies (Society for Human Resource Management, 2016). Further, certain states have laws protecting employees' political activity while others do not, leading to national debates when an employee is fired for political activity (Adams, 2012). One may be hesitant to engage in such a topic due to the

(known or unknown) legalities. Some topics- such as religion in the workplace- may also involve protected classes of people under The Civil Rights Act of 1964. There could be a fear of the conversation or subsequent behaviors being interpreted as harassment or as discriminatory, and the normative behavior surrounding these topics is blurred. Some topics are fine to talk about under certain conditions but can fall into the realm of harassment or discrimination if they become offensive. Religion, for example, may be acceptable to talk about when expressing weekend plans but may be frowned upon if the talk involves devaluing someone's religion, if an employee is proselytizing, or if a supervisor acts differently after learning of an employee's religion. The boundaries of acceptability may be indistinct or confusing to some, especially if they are not specifically indicated in the espoused rules of the organization.

Lastly, the third component of a taboo topic is that it has been deemed a taboo topic either in a general sense or in that particular workplace context. The work context itself is an important determinant of taboo. In some workplaces a taboo status might solely be contingent on societal interpretations of a topic. For example, in a manufacturing workplace, politics, religion, and sex may be taboo thanks to popular press (e.g. Burns, 2010; Buzzanell, 1992; McKay, 2016). Other times, HR specialists will recommend avoiding a specific topic, though it is not against the rules to discuss it. A specific workplace, such as an office on Capitol Hill or in a newsroom, may require the discussion of what others would consider taboo (i.e. politics). The culture of the organization also contributes to the context of the workplace. A culture of authenticity where employees are encouraged to be their true selves may provide a different context than a culture of impression management where employees are encouraged to be professional and put forth a uniform image. Using the definition of taboo, the norms and culture of the work context will

ultimately deem what is considered taboo because of what is “banned”, what is “moral” and what is considered of good “taste”.

Because taboo is culturally determined, the status of a taboo topic may change over time. Topics that may have been taboo in 1990 may not be taboo in 2017 while others persist throughout the years (e.g. Buzzanell, 1992). A changing taboo status may cause confusion in a multi-generational workplace where norms vary by tenure in the organization or societal generation. A taboo status often means that there are no precedents for appropriate behavior for addressing the topics because it is generally avoided altogether. When it is talked about, there are very few references in popular culture or workplace culture that suggest how one should talk about the topic with appropriate workplace etiquette. Therefore, deeming a topic as taboo makes the appropriate behavior for the situation even more elusive. An important distinction to make is the difference between taboo and other constructs that may be considered counterproductive work behavior (CWB) or mistreatment at work. The defining characteristics of CWBs and mistreatment are intent (or perceived intent), frequency, and power dynamics (Ballien, Escartin, Fross, & Zapf, 2017). Unlike CWBs and mistreatment, an employee may not intend on having a negative impact on coworkers or the organization when bringing up a taboo topic. It is also not guaranteed that it will cause a negative impact, especially if coworkers views align. There is also no clear frequency or pattern associated with taboo. It may be a one-time occurrence between coworkers, related to an ongoing societal event (e.g. an election), or regularly engaged by many in the organization. Lastly, this study bounds our examination of taboo to peer relationships, so power dynamics do not apply.

Because this is the first study to investigate taboo in the workplace, the present conceptualization of taboo bounds taboo to reflect topics considered taboo on a societal level.

Societal level taboos would be considered taboo in a “neutral” workplace, that is, a workplace that does not have any special characteristics or functioning associated with the topic. In this thesis, I focus on three different taboos: politics, religion, and sexual relationships. All three of these topics are associated with deep level values, are bound by legal acceptability, and have been culturally deemed taboo. It is important to note that the focus for this thesis is not the mere presence of taboo topics, but rather the way that the topics shape employee behavior. The recent survey on politics in the workplace suggests that when taboo conversations enter the workplace, coworkers behave differently towards one another (APA, 2016). Coworkers avoid each other, have a more negative view of one another, and recognize more workplace hostility (APA, 2016). To investigate why these conversations differ from conversations about other topics, I turn to understanding the behavior that occurs during the interactions and its underlying psychological mechanisms. Specifically, I examine how the workplace context motivates impression management strategies or authenticity during a taboo interaction and the subsequent behavior following the interaction. In the next sections I review the literature on impression management and authenticity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Impression Management

Impression management has a rich literature in the organizational sciences that began much earlier than the authenticity literature. Impression management has been used to understand organizational citizenship behaviors (Grant, & Mayer, 2009), self-regulation (Vohs, Baumeister, & Ciarocco, 2005), applicant behaviors in interviews (Ellis, West, Ryan, & DeShon, 2002; Kristof-Brown, Barrick, & Franke, 2002; Stevens, & Kristof, 1995), employees with stigmatized identities (Lyons, et al., 2016) and more topics of importance to organizational scholarship. The most common conceptualization of impression management is from Leary and Kowalski's (1990) review of 30 years of literature. In their proposed model, impression management is shown to involve two processes: impression motivation and impression construction. Impression motivation is a goal-oriented desire to present a certain image while impression construction is altering behavior to affect others' views (Leary & Kowalski, 1990).

There are several possible motivations to present a positive image in the professional setting. Jones and Pittman (1982) in social psychology proposed that the ultimate goal in managing impressions is the creating, sustaining, or otherwise augmentation of power in a relationship. Decades later Roberts (2005) echoed that belief in the organizational sciences, stating that constructing a professional image leads to power in the form of career success, social approval, and well-being. Impression management research in the stigma literature suggests that those with stigmatized identities impression manage in order to avoid discrimination and be socially accepted in the workplace (Clair, Beatty, & MacLean, 2008; Lyons, Martinez, Ruggs, Hebl, Ryan, O'Brien, Roebuck, 2016). Employees may also recognize that their values do not match with those of their coworkers and desire to show fit with the culture (Hewlin, 2003;

Roberts, 2005). A theory that serves as a neat umbrella for each of the above psychological motivations is self-enhancement theory. Self-enhancement theory states that individuals systematically strive to make others think well of them (Baumeister, 1982; Swann, Pelham, & Krull, 1989). Making others think well of them produces rewards (i.e. power, acceptance) (Baumeister, 1982; Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Schlenker, Weigold, & Hallam, 1990), and the best way to obtain the rewards is to “please the audience” (Baumeister, 1982). For examples in the workplace, the most researched contexts for impression management are job interviews and performance evaluations when individuals are extremely motivated to present themselves positively (Bolino, Kacmar, Turnley, & Gilstrap, 2008). The motivation to present a pleasing image may become especially salient in the context of taboo in the workplace.

As mentioned previously, taboo topics consists of subjects that individuals tend to feel very strongly about. Knowing that a topic is especially important may present as an opportunistic situation to impression manage. An individual could even be motivated to seek out these conversations to gain the social support of colleagues by pandering to their beliefs about a topic that they value significantly. On the other hand, individuals may not agree with the opinions of others on a taboo topic. Rather than risk potential conflict by expressing an opposing view and thus creating a negative self-image, employees may desire to impression manage to maintain a positive professional image and choose not to discuss the topic.

Just as in impression motivation, there are many possible expressions of impression construction. Researchers typically call them impression management strategies. Bolino and colleagues (2008) found that researchers have classified over 30 types of impression management strategies. These strategies often overlap or have minor differences and are operationalized according to the study or researcher’s main goal. The two most studied

impression management strategies are ingratiation and self-promotion (Bolino, Long, & Turnley, 2016). Ingratiation actions include self-characterization and opinion conformity to seek positive affection and likability (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Bolino et al., 2016). Self-promotion actions include performance claims (i.e. boasting) and performances themselves to receive the attribution of competence and subsequent likability (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Bolino et al., 2016). In the context of taboo in the workplace, the opinion conformity of ingratiation may be especially relevant since taboo often involves value-based matters that evoke opinions regarding ideals of society. Self-promotion is probably less likely given that taboos are value-based rather than competence based. It could be the case, however, that people may boast about their knowledge of or involvement with a topic to elicit competence and therefore likeability. For example, an employee may use their involvement in a unionized organization to bolster their discussion about politics in the workplace.

The success or failure of impression management strategies has a multilevel effect in the workplace- there can be organizational outcomes of impression management (e.g. retention and social capital), work group or dyadic outcomes (e.g. cohesion), and individual level outcomes (e.g. performance ratings) (Barrick, Shaffer, & DeGrassi, 2009; Higgins, Judge, & Ferris, 2003; Roberts, 2005). Whether the outcomes of impression management are positive or negative for the individual's well-being is likely moderated by the alignment of the outwardly portrayed image with the individual's true, authentic identity (Roberts, 2005). On one hand, employees that use impression management strategies that operate within their values and identity are likely to experience a boost to self-esteem from the organizational outcomes (i.e. positive performance reviews; Schlenker, et al., 1990). In this way, it would seem beneficial to embrace impression management strategies when taboo topics enter the work arena. On the other hand, constructing

an impression that is dissimilar to the true self expends energy and resources that could be better used to perform on the job (Vohs, Baumeister, & Ciarocco, 2005). Stigma researchers theoretically propose and empirically provide evidence that concealing parts of a person's core identity can cause physical and psychological stress (Chaudior & Fisher, 2010; Clair, et al., 2005; Goffman, 1963; Ragins, 2008). Ragins (2008) represents this discontinuity as identity disconnects, which she argues should be reduced to avoid negative psychological consequences. This thinking falls more in line with the "bring your whole self to work" mantra where it would not be personally beneficial to use impression management strategies, especially if they are far from your true self.

Authenticity

Compared to the literature on impression management, authenticity has a relatively small body of literature in the organizational sciences. Authenticity at work is often studied in relation to well-being (Ilies, Morgeson, & Nahrgang, 2005; Ménard & Brunet, 2011; Robinson, Lopez, Ramos, & Nartova-Bochaver, 2013) and job and life meaningfulness (Ménard & Brunet, 2011; Schlegel, Hicks, Arndt, & King, 2009). Authenticity research has also expanded to explore more work-related outcomes such as engagement (Leroy, Anseel, Dimitrova, & Sels, 2013; Reis, Tullen & Story, 2016) and performance (Leroy, et. al, 2015). The positive outcomes for authenticity found in organizational literature and in general psychology literature dominate the literature. Like impression management, authenticity can be broken down into motivations and behaviors.

Authenticity first requires an element of realizing one's feelings, motives, and opinions (Kernis, 2003). Next, there is an element of receiving self-relevant information without distorting or ignoring it (Kernis, 2003). These two processes reflect the psychological motivation of self-

verification. Self-verification is the motivation to act in accordance to one's self-concept in order to receive self-verifying information (Swann & Ely, 1984; Swann, et al., 1989). Being perceived as self-congruent is beneficial because it secures controllability over one's actions, ensures knowledge of the self, and increases confidence in social interactions (Swann et al., 1989). That is, people want to show others who they truly are because it helps them frame the world as predictable. Being self-congruent also fulfills the psychological contract with others to present themselves as they truly are (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Self-verification may be especially motivating in times of conflict or novelty that give rise to self-salience (Jones & Pittman, 1982).

Taboo topics often involve core values or evoke feelings related to core identities. People with self-verification motives would view a taboo topic as challenging who they believe they truly are or other self-views and they would be especially motivated to act in self-congruent ways (Swann, Polzer, Seyle, & Ko, 2004). The atypical nature of the situation may also cause people that would normally be motivated to self-enhance to self-verify because without preconceived intentions, it may become more important to confirm their true-self than construct a professional image (Swann et al., 2004).

The behavior portion of authenticity also involves two components: action and relational authenticity. Action authenticity is behaving in accordance with one's true self, which is contrasted by Kernis (2002) to acting merely to please others or to attain rewards (or avoid punishments). Relational authenticity is specifically behaving authentically in relationships with others so that they see "the real you" whether it be good or bad (Kernis, 2002). The tendency to express one's true self would be especially salient in taboo conversations. Behaving in an authentic manner in the face of taboo, especially with another employee, would ensure stable self-conceptions about deeply rooted content of the core identity (Swann et al., 1989). A

misalignment in behavior related to such topics have the potential to create extreme internal conflict (Swann et al., 1989) and violate a social contract between another person (Kernis, 2002).

However, authentic behavior may not always be the best behavior to display in the workplace. Authentic behavior may be subjected to social sanctions or punishment because of situational norms (Ilies et al., 2005). Discussing sensitive topics may fall into this category and employees could decide that it is better to strategically present themselves to avoid negative consequences. Still, those with a self-verification motive would often rather receive negative feedback than inaccurate or dishonest feedback (Swann et. al, 2004). Therefore, it is likely that those with a self-verification motive are more likely to act authentically, regardless of the fear of social penalty.

The behavior of expressing one's self authentically is likely different for everyone. Conceptually, there are two ways that scholars operationalize authenticity as a behavior. In the first, theorists believe that there is one true, core identity to which an individual characterizes themselves. The core identity has been conceptualized with several names including the phenomenal self (Jones & Pittman, 1982), the true self-concept (Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Schlegel, et al., 2009), and one's intrinsic self (Schimel, Arndt, Pyszczynski, 2001; Schimel, Arndt, Banko, & Cook, 2004). A person can operate in alignment with their core identity by displaying their unfiltered true emotions, values, and personality (Goldman & Kernis, 2002; Kernis, 2003). Alternatively, they can evoke a separate self (e.g. the extrinsic self; Schimel, et al., 2004) or intentionally manipulate the image they wish to portray (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). In other words, the two constructs of authenticity and impression management cannot occur concurrently; if one impression manages, they cannot also be expressing themselves authentically. As mentioned with the impression management literature review, many scholars

address authentic behavior as a continuum in their work on impression management. Leary and Kowalski (1990) identify the self-concept as a key determinant of the impressions that people create. They posit that individuals may impression manage to get others to view them as they view themselves (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Additionally, the self-concept acts as a boundary for what impressions individuals construct because people desire to be consistent and authentic (Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Ilies et al, 2005). In this school of thinking, impression management may be authentic and reflect the true self or it may be inauthentic and construe deceptive behaviors (Bolino et al., 2016; Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Roberts, 2008). I represent two conceptualizations pictorially in Figure 1.

While the two constructs share conceptual similarities that are often discussed by researchers, there has been very little empirical evidence to investigate how exactly they are related. Roulin and colleagues (2015) investigated honest versus deceptive impression management and its impact on the hiring context. However, they focused on how to detect deception and only measured impression management as honest or deceptive. The measures of impression management and authenticity sometimes include elements of the other but the constructs themselves are not considered during the development of the scale. For example, in developing the Dispositional Authenticity Scale, Wood et al. (2008) included items like “I always feel I need to do what others expect me to do” and “I think it is better to be yourself, than to be popular” but in discussing the factor structure, impression management was not a consideration. Impression management scales almost always include classifications of the behaviors without regard to authenticity (e.g. Andrews & Kacmar, 2001; Bolino & Turnley, 1999; Kumar & Beyerlein, 1991). In a notable exception, Ferris and colleagues (2005) created a scale for political skill, a skill associated with the execution of impression management, in which

they listed sincerity as one of the four critical dimensions of successful political skill. Even though their measure was a self-evaluation with items like “When communicating with others I try to be genuine in what I say and do”, the importance of authenticity in the conceptualization of political skill was actually the other person’s interpretation of the actions as authentic. Measures of authenticity almost exclusively focus on felt authenticity (e.g. I feel authentic) rather than another’s perception of authenticity (e.g. I think that person was authentic) (see van den Bosch & Taris, 2014 or Wood et. al., 2008 for examples).

In this thesis, I take the opportunity to explore the relationship between authenticity and impression management. They are proposed as separate and independent processes that are the result of different motivations. The relationship between impression management and authenticity may become especially apparent in the context of taboo interactions. Taboo topics are rooted in deep level values and, as mentioned above, individuals may have both the motivation to impression manage and the motivation to be authentic. It would be possible to see how people enact both motivations and the subsequent behavior. For example, an individual may impression manage in an authentic manner. Alternatively, people may make a choice to impression manage or be authentic so there is a range of possible behaviors that may result from a taboo interaction.

The behavioral response of interest in the present study is helping behaviors. Research on the impact of taboo in the workplace confirms the belief of society that taboo topics are divisive; employees report the negative consequences on their relationships (APA, 2016; McGregor, 2017). For example, a survey discussed in McGregor (2017) showed that half of employees surveyed witnessed an argument break out as the result of a political discussion. The survey administered on behalf of the American Psychological Association showed that arguments

originating from political discussions at work led to a small but significant number of employees thinking more negatively towards their coworkers and feeling more isolated from them (APA, 2016). The survey also found, however, that some coworkers have bonded over politics and now think more positively of each other (APA, 2016). Social interactions have the ability to influence the willingness of employees to provide help to others (Lin & Kwantes, 2015). I consider helping behaviors as way to capture the behavioral outcomes of taboo interactions.

Helping Behaviors

Positive coworker relationships have a strong and unique effect on employees' workplace experience. Social support from coworkers has been found to directly relate to important work attitudes (e.g. job satisfaction, organizational commitment, role perception; Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008), outcomes (e.g. turnover, performance, OCBs; Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008), and overall well-being or stress (Beehr, Jex, Stacy, & Murray, 2000; Viswesvaran, Sanchez, & Fisher, 1999). It also functions as a buffering mechanism through mediating and moderating processes to affect work stress (Viswesvaran, et al., 1999). Therefore, in many ways, coworkers have the power to "make the place" (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008; Schneider, 1987).

One of the key ways that coworkers show support is through helping one another. In the workplace, helping is conceptualized by one employee assisting another with work-related tasks (Chou & Stauffer, 2016; Mossholder, Richardson, & Settoon, 2011). This includes taking some of the workload by completing tasks for someone else, giving advice about the task, or offering feedback. Some researchers also include help with a social task, such as listening to work-related problems and giving advice, in their conceptualization (Tews, Michel, & Ellingson, 2013; Van Dyne & Lepine, 1998). In the present study, I consider both types of helping behaviors because

studies have found that different types of helping may relate to different outcomes (e.g. Tews et al., 2013).

Many researchers have sought to explore how the relationship between two coworkers motivates helping behaviors (e.g. Anderson, & Williams, 1996; Chou & Stauffer, 2016; Mills & Clark, 1982; Spitzmuller, & Van Dyne, 2013; Weinstein & Ryan, 2010). A foundational theory of helping motivation is the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). Researchers use the social exchange theory to argue that individuals provide help in response to a positive experience with another employee (Anderson & Williams, 1996; LePine, Piccolo, Jackson, Mathieu, & Saul, 2008; Spitzmuller, & Van Dyne, 2013). Clark and Mills (1993) proposed a different view of relationships that lead to helping behaviors. They argue that in a communal orientation, a person is willing to help because they are concerned about the other person and the quality of their relationship. In an exchange relationship, however, a person is willing to help because they expect something in return from the other person. Yet another theory, the functional theory, argues that rather than helping based on an interactive relationship involving the other, helping is motivated by personal goals such as career advancement, needs satisfaction, or the expression of values (Clary, Snyder, Ridge, Copeland, Stukas, Haugen, & Miene, 1998; Penner, Dovidio, Piliavin, & Schroeder, 2005; Penner, Midili, & Kegelmeyer, 1997; Taber & Deosthali, 2014). The literature on helping behaviors suggests that helping behaviors may be based on individual motivations or on relationships with others. These motivations are related to the motivations of focus, self-enhancement and self-verification that underlie impression management and authentic behavior. Regardless of the basis for helping, research shows that helping is beneficial.

The recipient of help receives numerous benefits including positive job attitudes (Harris, Winkowski, & Engdahl, 2007; Ng & Sorenson, 2008), decreased turnover (Tews et al. 2013),

and positive coworker relationships (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008). Helping behaviors are not only beneficial to the recipient, but can be beneficial to the helper, the group, and the organization (Ng & Sorenson, 2008; Podsakoff, Whiting, Podsakoff, & Blume, 2009; Spitzmuller & Van Dyne, 2013). As an important workplace occurrence, it is valuable to consider how taboo interactions may affect helping behaviors. Extra-role helping is a “cooperative behavior that is noncontroversial”, that “builds and preserves relationships; and it emphasizes interpersonal harmony” (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998 p.109). Taboo topics as they are conceptualized in the workplace are the exact opposite of that- they are indeed controversial and have the potential to disrupt interpersonal harmony. Changing an individual’s propensity to help his or her fellow employee could result in the decrease of the benefits of helping behaviors such as positive coworker relationships. I seek to investigate how taboo at work may ultimately affect helping behaviors. Next, I present my proposed model in Figure 2.

Hypothesis Development

My model takes an event-focused approach to understanding how an interaction (i.e. a discussion or conversation) about a taboo topic may affect the helping behavior given by one coworker to another. I bound the research to an event that has an identifiable temporal beginning and end to better understand how and when taboo can affect employees and trigger subsequent behaviors (Morgeson, Mitchell, & Liu, 2015). Although a taboo interaction could potentially occur in a group setting or larger, I solely focus on a dyadic exchange, and only on one individual in the exchange. Further research may address both parties, but I limit this study to one person’s experience with taboo. The focal employee will be the person that is in an interaction with a coworker that brings a taboo topic into the conversation. To analyze how a taboo topic may affect helping behaviors, I start with the focal employee’s motivation before the

interaction, their responses during the interaction, and the way their response is then subsequently related to helping behaviors.

Although motivations play a key role in the development of impression management and authenticity theories (Baumeister, 1982; Jones & Pittman, 1989; Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Kernis, 2003; Goldman & Kernis, 2002), and in empirical studies (Barsness, Diekmann, & Seidel, 2005), most research tends to focus on the outcomes of impression management and authenticity rather than antecedents (e.g. Bolino, et al., 2016). In other words, researchers talk about motivation but seldom measure or manipulate it empirically in these literatures. The research on impression management often begins with the assumption that a positive image is warranted, such as in interviews or performance reviews (e.g. Ellis, et al., 2002; Kristof-Brown, et al., 2002; McFarland, Ryan, & Kriska, 2003; Stevens & Kristof, 1995; Wayne & Kacmar, 1991) and motives are not measured. Similarly, research on inauthentic or deceptive behavior often assumes that individuals behave that way because they are motivated to seek the rewards associated with the fake image (e.g. Roulin, et al., 2015). Researchers have called for more attention to the motivations that underlie these behaviors to understand when people are motivated to impression manage and when they are motivated to be inauthentic (Bolino, et. al, 2008; Bolino, et al., 2016). I respond to this call and both manipulate and measure motivation, specifically in the context of taboo interactions.

Individuals with a self-enhancement motivation seek to create a good impression in the eyes of others. Impression management accomplishes that goal by intentionally manipulating one's presentation to create a good impression. In this study, I operationalize impression management with ingratiation behaviors. Ingratiation behaviors are the impression management strategy used to be seen as likable (Bolino, et al., 2016; Jones & Pitman, 1982) which would be

the most probable choice given a self-enhancement motivation. I predict that the focal employee will display a greater number of ingratiation behaviors during the interaction if they have a higher self-enhancement motivation.

Hypothesis 1: Greater self-enhancement motivation will be positively related to the level of ingratiation behaviors during the discussion.

In the model, I propose a separate but parallel pathway to represent how the focal employee's behavior during and after a taboo interaction may differ if they have a different motivation. I expect that an employee's self-verification motivation will be positively related to authentic behavior. The motivation to self-verify encourages individuals to behave in line with their core or true self, which is accomplished by behaving more authentically.

Hypothesis 2: Greater self-verification motivation will be positively related to the degree of authenticity during the discussion.

Hypothesis 1 and 2 use motivation to infer how a person would act, regardless of the topic of discussion. To explore the assumption that taboo topics differ than regular topics, I also hypothesize an interaction effect between motivation and topic, such that the relationships between motivation and behavior during a non-taboo discussion differ from the relationships between motivation and behavior during a taboo discussion.

When an employee becomes engaged in a taboo conversation- initiated by another employee- there is not a preset or norm of behavioral responses because taboo topics are not often talked about in the workplace. The determinants of the employee's reaction are likely to be dependent on the motivation that they have during the interaction. I expect that an employee's motivation to self-enhance will be positively related to the use of impression management

strategies as a response to a taboo interaction. I hypothesize that the relationship between self-enhancement and ingratiation will be stronger for a taboo topic than for a non-taboo topic, such that those with a high self-enhancement motivation will show significantly more ingratiation behaviors if the topic is a taboo topic compared to a non-taboo topic. This relationship is modeled in Figure 3. Research suggests that people are more likely to ingratiate when they are motivated to leave a good impression. With a non-taboo topic, people may not feel they need to work as hard to be likeable. For example, talking about the weather can be neutral and an individual may not feel the need to ingratiate in order to be seen as likeable. On the other hand, talking about politics may cause some doubt about how to be seen as likeable to the other person because the topic is associated with people's values, may not be appropriate in the (work) context, and could possibly have legal consequences if not expressed carefully. A higher level of ingratiation would be expected in that situation, especially when one is explicitly motivated to make a good impression.

Hypothesis 3a: There will be an interaction between self-enhancement motivation and the topic type such that self-enhancement will be more strongly related to ingratiation for taboo topics than non-taboo topics.

In an interaction where a taboo topic is being discussed, authentic behavior may include expressing one's values or displaying one's true felt emotions in order to receive self-confirming views about one's self. Similarly, I hypothesize that the relationship between self-verification and authenticity will be stronger for a taboo topic than for a non-taboo topic, such that those with low self-verification motivation will have the same rates of authenticity if the topic is a taboo topic compared to a non-taboo topic. This relationship is modeled in Figure 4. Whether the topic is taboo or not, individuals will be likely to act at their trait level of authenticity because they are

not motivated to behave otherwise. However, a high self-verification motivation will produce much greater authenticity for a taboo topic than for a non-taboo topic. The value-laden nature of taboo topics would prompt core values, which is related to the feeling of authenticity (Ilies et al., 2005); an individual will behave and feel more authentic when the topic is related to a core value. For example, talking about the weather requires less personal sharing and expression of the true self whereas talking about politics will elicit behaviors that are aligned with core values.

Hypothesis 3b: There will be an interaction between self-verification motivation and the topic type such that self-verification will be more strongly related to authenticity for taboo topics than for non-taboo topics.

The behaviors of the employee during the interaction will predict their helping behaviors after the interaction. The goal seeking nature of impression management is an exchange orientation, wherein the relationship is characterized by behaving with the goal of deriving personal benefit (Clark & Mills, 1993; Mills & Clark, 1982; Weistein & Ryan, 2010). I predict that an individual's high ingratiation behaviors during the taboo interaction will lead to a greater likelihood of providing helping behaviors. Providing helping behaviors after the interaction will be behaviorally consistent with ingratiation behaviors and will also contribute to the goal of leaving a good impression. Researchers have found that employees are motivated to perform OCBs and forge positive peer relationships to facilitate their positive image at work (Bolino & Turnley, 1999; Long, Baer, Colquitt, Outlaw, & Dhensa-Kahlon, 2015). It is likely that the focal employee will feel that providing the coworker with help will facilitate a positive image. Therefore, the focal employee will help with the intentions of receiving personal benefit.

Hypothesis 4: The level of ingratiation behaviors during the interaction will be positively related to the provision of helping behaviors after the interaction.

I expect that greater authenticity during the taboo discussion will create a communal orientation towards helping. A communal orientation towards helping is characterized by a focus on the relationship with the other person rather than the benefit one might receive for helping (Clark & Mills, 1993). The motivation underlying a communal orientation varies but it is more personal in nature, such as in close relationships or with others with whom one identifies (Clark & Mills, 1993; Mills & Clark, 1982; Weistein & Ryan, 2010). Because relational authenticity necessitates a personal element of sharing values, it may lead to the creation or experience of a communal orientation. A communal orientation to helping means that the likelihood of helping behaviors may depend on the relationship with the other person. The alignment of values expressed during a taboo interaction has the potential to influence the relationship between the coworkers. An alignment- they agree on the taboo topic- may mean the relationship is positive and the focal employee would want to help the coworker out of a sense of communion. A misalignment- they disagree on the taboo topic- may mean the relationship is negative and the focal employee would not want to help the coworker. I expect a three-way interaction between authenticity, topic type, and the alignment of values, such that when the topic type is a taboo topic, the relationship between authenticity and helping behaviors will be stronger when the values are aligned. This relationship is modeled in Figure 5. When the employee has displayed highly authentic behaviors during a taboo interaction and the focal employee and coworker's values are aligned, I expect that the employee will be more likely to provide help because of the positive relationship or similarity to the other person. When the employee has displayed highly authentic behaviors during a taboo interaction but the focal employee's values were not aligned with those of the other person, I expect that they will be unlikely to provide help because they do not feel a positive relationship or similarity with the other person. In contrast, when a person

behaves inauthentically, it is harder to establish a communal orientation because they have removed the personal element of the interaction. There is no longer an ability to form an authentic relationship because the focal employee has not been their true self. I expect that regardless of their alignment of values, a focal employee that behaved inauthentically during the interaction will be unlikely to provide help.

It is important to note that if there is not a taboo topic, there cannot be value alignment because of the nature of a taboo topic compared to a neutral topic. For example, having an opinion about the weather does not normally trigger values, so there would not be the chance for values to align. At high and low levels of authenticity a neutral topic would not create (or destroy) a communal relationship like a taboo topic might. Instead, an individual will act in line with their true self, which can be expressed in many different ways. Therefore, I predict that there will not be a relationship between authenticity and helping behaviors for interactions with neutral topics. This relationship is modeled in Figure 6.

Hypothesis 5: The alignment of values will moderate the relationship between the degree of authenticity and the provision of helping behaviors such that the relationship will be strong when there is a taboo topic and the two values are aligned values are aligned and there is a taboo topic.

METHODS

Design

To test these hypotheses, I used a between-subjects 2 (Self-enhancement vs. Self-verification) by 2 (Taboo topics vs. non-taboo topic) fully crossed experiment, though I chose four different expressions of taboo to test, making 10 experimental conditions. The study was conducted as a survey using the online platform Qualtrics and administered using Amazon's Mechanical Turk crowdsourcing platform. Based on several reviews and studies, Amazon's Mturk has been suggested as a credible source of participants that provide reliable data similar to or better than the quality of student samples (Keith, Tay, & Harms, 2017). Cheung and colleagues (2017) suggest that the study design and research questions may influence the type of validity (i.e. internal, statistical conclusion, construct) that can be found in an Mturk sample. Keith, Tay, and Harms (2017) give a reporting checklist for Mturk samples, which is conveyed in Appendix B as well as throughout the methods.

Participants

According to an a priori power analysis acquired using G Power version 3.1.9.2 (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007), the study required 280 participants to detect a medium effect size of .25 with a significance level of $p < .05$. The total sample was 281 and there were 268 participants across the 10 possible conditions after participants were eliminated for failing manipulation and attention checks. A post hoc power analysis determined $1 - \beta = .82$. All participants were located in the United States, were native English speakers (i.e. English as a first language, learned English as a young child), and were employed as a requirement before participation. Participants worked an average of 39.36 hours per week ($SD = 8.62$) with 81%

employed full time and 94.4% reporting that they work with coworkers at least some of the time. The average age of the sample was 35.79 years ($SD = 10.15$ years), 56% self-identified as female, 77.6% White, 9% Black/African American, 4.9% multi-racial, 4.1% Asian/Asian American, and 4.5% self-identified as a different race or ethnicity.

Procedure

The study was posted to Mturk under the ‘Surveys’ category and the quick description read “You will first provide information about yourself and your opinions. Then, you and a partner will work to complete a task before evaluating your experience.”. The complete posting of the Mturk Human Intelligence Task (HIT) is in Appendix A. Mturk workers self-selected into the study.

The first part of the study was presented as a simple survey where participants answer questions about themselves and their opinions. It included an informed consent form, screening questions, demographic information, a political questionnaire and control measures. The consent form, along with the debriefing form at the conclusion of the study, are in Appendix B. The control variables can be found in Appendix C. The participant provided their specific position on eight issues as measured by a shortened version of Koleva et al. (2012)’s Political Attitudes Questionnaire: abortion, defense spending, same-sex marriage, global warming, stem cell research, combating terrorism, illegal immigration, and gun control. This scale was used to collect baseline opinions of participants of each issue, and to provide a cover story for the fictional coworker to use when integrating the taboo into the response.

Upon filling out the initial survey, participants were introduced to the “company” they work for in the study. This cover story included the motivation manipulation by explaining the

culture of the company through a company description, an employee testimonial, and the CEO greeting. Each element either emphasized that the employee should “be themselves and present an authentic image” or “be professional and present a positive image”. The full materials are in Appendix D.

Next, participants had the opportunity to “get to know” their virtual coworker via a computer mediated interaction. Participants received a list of prompts that they would soon respond to in order to getting acquainted with their coworker and the time that would be given to answer each question. When they advanced, participants had three minutes to answer the prompt and a timer on the bottom of the page. The prompts and the timer were designed to increase the realism of the fictitious other’s responses as well as to encourage participants to share details about themselves and have a chance to react to the virtual partner introducing a taboo topic.

In answering the second prompt, the virtual partner introduced the taboo topic of conversation in the taboo conditions (self-enhancement x taboo; self-verification x taboo). Participants in the non-taboo conditions had a similar conversation but with a non-taboo related topic (self-enhancement x non-taboo; self-verification x non-taboo). The data from the exchanges were recorded to allow for a qualitative analysis of the interaction. The prompts and the responses that the virtual coworker gave to them, including the taboo manipulations, are in Appendix E.

After this exchange, the participants were given a task to complete. The task required participants to evaluate advertisements for multiple clients. The advertisements varied in content length and quality. Participants were asked to rate the overall advertisement on a scale of 1-10, identify any issues with the content or design of the advertisement, and then provide recommendations to the client to make the advertisement better. The variable content of the

advertisements task is designed so that the length of completion time to evaluate each advertisement would theoretically vary based on the quality of the advertisement and detail or the participant, rather than depending on cognitive ability. Examples of tasks can be found in Appendix F. The instructions made it clear that there are 16 independent tasks that must be finished between the participant and their coworker. Although not explicitly stated, the participants are solely responsible for 8. The instructions stated that if a person is ahead of their coworker (i.e. finished with their half), they will have the opportunity to help their coworker complete the 16 ads or to move on to the next part of the survey.

Once the participant completed their 8 ads, the survey informed them their coworker has not completed their tasks yet. The screen asked if they would like to help their coworker by completing some of their coworker's tasks and gives a "Help" or "Move On" option. If participants chose "Move On", they moved to the next part of the study. If participants chose to help, they are presented with a new task. When they were finished with this task, the participant was presented with the option to help 4 more times for a total of 5 opportunities to help their coworker.

After completing the task, the participant was thanked for their role as an employee and asked about their reactions and evaluation of both the task they completed and the coworker they worked with. Before moving on to the final part of the survey, they were instructed to complete a simple ball tossing activity to "clear their mind" before answering more questions. This activity was done with their coworker and 2 other virtual (fictional) people. In this activity called Cyberball, the participant received the ball to throw to someone else seven times, so they had seven opportunities to choose who to throw the ball to. Once that was completed, participants answered some dependent measures including their behavior during the survey (authenticity and

ingratiation) and their motivation during the survey (self-enhancement and self-verification). These measures are featured in Appendix G.

Manipulations

Motivations. The self-enhancement and self-verification motives were manipulated by changing the “culture” of the fictitious organization that the participant and their coworker work for during the activity. The self-enhancement condition told participants that the organization is a very professional company that likes to keep a polished friendly environment. Following the work of Schlenker et al. (1990) and Vohs et. al (2005), participants were told that they should act in a manner so that the other person will see them as likeable and socially attractive. Originally, Schlenker and colleagues (1990) prompted participants to act “so that the other person will see you as competent, likeable, and so forth” (Schlenker et al., 1990) but additional research by Vohs and colleagues (2005) found that striving for competence and likeability may lead to different patterns of behavior. Additionally, being told to act competent or likeable has implications for gender roles (Joiner, Vohs, Katz, Kwon, & Kline, 2003; Vohs et al., 2005). Therefore, participants were told to act favorably and socially attractive, as suggested by Vohs et al. (2005). In the self-verification condition, the manipulation said that the organization is a very free-spirited company that likes to keep an open and friendly environment. Participants were told that they should “act naturally, be honest, and be yourself” regardless of what others think (Schlenker et al., 1990).

In both conditions, participants also saw a testimonial from a past employee of the company as well as a welcome message from the CEO that emphasized the culture of the organization. These additional messages provided multiple perspectives of the culture and examples of ways that the culture manifested. For example, the CEO welcome message said,

“The typical employee is especially attentive to [the business model *or* their inner creativity] which helps to deliver the greatest quality of work while maintaining a [uniformly professional *or* creative and authentic] appearance.” Participants were then asked to describe ways that their behavior will reflect the culture of the company when interacting with coworkers and clients to further cement the behavioral expectations of the condition. Pilot tests indicated that 70% of qualitative responses used the same descriptors of the company culture to describe their future behavior during the study (i.e. authentic or honest for the self-verification condition and professional or positive for the self-enhancement condition) or described their behavior in a way that is aligned with the company culture.

Taboo. While the primary goal is to compare taboo topics to non-taboo topics, I recognize that the classification of a topic as taboo for the workplace varies. For that reason, I pilot tested several taboo topics to see which were rated universally inappropriate for the workplace (from Taboo for the workplace- very inappropriate to Normal topic for the workplace- very appropriate), had the greatest variability in agreement with the opinion expressed (from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree) and were topics that the respondents cared about (from None at all to A Great Deal) (the questions are featured in Appendix H and the means and standard deviations for the pilot tests are in Table 1). Each topic test had two opposite opinions to capture the range of agreement with a topic. The topics tested were gun control, abortion, immigration, and same-sex marriage which were compared to opinions of pets and fitness as neutral topics. A convenience sample of 104 participants from a large Midwestern university’s research pool participated in a between-subjects shortened version of the overall design. After the coworker expressed the taboo or neutral topic, the participant was asked the appropriateness

for the workplace (appropriateness) for the topic, agreement with the topic (agreement), and the degree to which they cared about the topic mentioned (care).

Using a multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA) to simultaneously test appropriateness, agreement and care across the eight topics, results showed that appropriateness was found to be significantly different across the topics, $F(9,104)=4.42$, $MSE=4.71$, $p<.001$ as well as agreement $F(9,104)=3.20$, $MSE=3.86$, $p=.002$. Tukey's HSD post hoc test confirmed that all of the topics were significantly different in appropriateness than the neutral fitness condition, which was rated much more appropriate than the other topics, except for the liberal immigration topic. I choose to use the neutral fitness topic rather than the neutral pets topic since it was rated significantly different than the others in appropriateness but the neutral pets topic was not. The same-sex marriage conservative topic had the highest mean difference in appropriateness from the neutral fitness topic (2.47, $p<.000$), followed by the abortion pro-choice topic (2.09, $p=.003$), deeming these prompts the most inappropriate for the workplace. I narrowed the possible taboo topics to same-sex marriage and abortion rather than gun control or immigration from this result.

The only significant difference between the topics for the agreement question was the same-sex marriage conservative view which had the least agreement ($M=2.55$, $SD=1.64$) and the same-sex marriage liberal view which had the most agreement ($M=4.50$, $SD=.76$) with a mean difference of -1.95, $p <.01$. The difference in means likely indicates that the sample population holds similar opinions on the topic (agree with the liberal view and disagree with the conservative view of same sex marriage) which would not be the most desirable for the current project because I am interested in value alignment and some degree of variance is required. However, abortion had more variance in opinion given that the two-opposing opinions (prolife and prochoice) were not rated significantly different in agreement and had the highest standard

deviations in all three questions. It is also possible that the conservative same-sex marriage topic could have been rated the most inappropriate because it had the most disagreement.

Lastly, while the care question was not found to be significantly different between the topics, the two same-sex marriage topics had the highest means, followed by abortion pro-choice, so there may be some indication that they are sensitive topics that would align with the conceptualization of taboo as presented above.

Although I initially only wanted to identify one taboo topic, I chose to include both same-sex marriage and abortion topics. While same-sex marriage seems to be the most inappropriate, has the most disagreement, and it is likely a topic people care about, I want to avoid the possibility of confounding appropriateness and agreement with the same-sex marriage topic. Abortion is also a good topic because it is rated as inappropriate, has a great variance with agreement, and is likely a topic people care about. There was a total of 5 possible topic manipulations presented in the experiment: prolife abortion, prochoice abortion, same-sex marriage liberal, same-sex marriage conservative, and fitness (neutral). I collected twice as much data for the neutral condition than for the taboo conditions so that there was enough data to compare overall taboo conditions to the neutral condition.

Measures

All measures are presented in the Appendices as listed above.

Trait Authenticity. Robinson et. al. (2013) found that trait and context-specific (i.e. work specific) authenticity each contributed unique and significant variance in the prediction of well-being. Keeping this in mind, the trait measure of authenticity was used as a control variable. To account for trait authenticity, I used the twelve item ($\alpha=.88$) Individual Authenticity Measure

at Work (IAM Work; van den Bosch & Taris, 2014) to measure authenticity contextualized to the work domain.

The IAM Work Scale has three subdimensions of Authentic Living, Self-Alienation, and External Influence. When testing the factor structure of the scale, van den Bosch & Taris (2014) found that all fit indices for the three-factor model were exactly the same as a hierarchical model with the three factors loading onto a general factor. In their discussion, the authors concluded that with no empirical evidence to prefer one factor structure over the other, one should consider the construct they are trying to measure: “If one is interested in obtaining a detailed view of how an individual perceives their work in relation to authenticity, the tripartite construct would be the measure of choice. However, if one is only interested in obtaining a global indication of the general experience of authenticity at work, the total overall score of the IAM Work would seem preferable.” (van den Bosch & Taris, 2014). In this study, I use the total overall score of the IAM Work.

Trait Ingratiation. I used the 22 item ($\alpha=.94$) Measuring Ingratiation Behavior in an Organizational Setting Scale (MIBOS; Kumar & Beyerlein, 1991) to measure the normal (i.e. trait) frequency of an employee’s ingratiation behavior at work. The MIBOS was created to refer to subordinate-supervisor relationships so the scale was adapted to reflect lateral coworker relationships and so that items were clear to participants. For example, the item “Impress upon your supervisor that only he/she can help you in a given situation mainly to make him/her feel good about himself/herself.” was adapted to “Impress upon your coworker that only he can help you in a given situation mainly to make him feel good about himself.”

Though the MIBOS has four subscales- Opinion Conformity, Other Enhancement, Self-Promotion, and Favor Rendering- the items correlate highly with each other and many load onto

more than one factor (Kumar & Beyerlein, 1991). Previous research supports the overlapping nature, suggesting that there are strong relationships between different ingratiation tactics (Jones & Wortman, 1973) and people do not prefer one tactic over the other (i.e. they either ingratiate or they do not; Pandey, 1981). Further, research using the MIBOS only report an overall general score (Asadullah, Haider, De Pablos Heredero & Musaddiq, 2016; Sibunruang, Garcia, & Tolentino, 2016). To confirm the factor structure of reporting one overall score rather than the subscales, I compared a four-factor structure to a hierarchical structure with the four factors loading onto one underlying factor using confirmatory factory analysis. The factor structures reported exactly the same fit statistics, RMSEA = .08, CFI = .87, SRMR = .06, indicating a moderately fitting model for both structures. With no empirical evidence to support the use of one factor structure over the other and in line with previous uses of the scale, this study only reports a general ingratiation score.

Self- Monitoring. In the impression management literature, there is research to suggest how traits influence the success of impression management (Bolino et al., 2016; Ferris, et al., 2005; Snyder, 1974) but there is very little research that suggests how traits influence the individual differences in frequency of impression management strategies. Self-monitoring is a concept that is thought to be mildly related to the use of impression management and strongly related to the success of impression management (Kilduff, & Day, 1994; Snyder, & Gangestad, 1986). However, there has been some debate about the latent content of the variable and its construct validity (Gabrenya, & Arkin, 1980; Snyder, & Gangestad, 1986). It is included as a potential control as it may relate to individual differences in the choice to use impression management. I used the 18-item ($\alpha=.79$) Self-Monitoring Scale (Snyder & Gangestad, 1986) to evaluate self-monitoring.

Agreeableness. The decision to behave authentically or ingratiate in a particular situation may be related to an individual's personality, especially agreeableness. To control for this possibility, the Agreeableness 20-item ($\alpha = .96$) subscale of the Trait Descriptive Adjectives (TDA) Scale of the Big 5 Personality Traits (Goldberg, 1992) was used to measure agreeableness.

Altruism. Independent of the situation, researchers suggest that some individuals tend to help others more than other individuals (Rushton, Chrisjohn, & Fekken, 1981). To avoid confounding motivation or behavior with altruism as the underlying cause for helping, a 20-item ($\alpha = .91$) scale originally by Rushton, Chrisjohn, & Fekken, (1981) was used to control for altruism.

Self-Enhancement Motivation. Even though I manipulated motivation, I also wanted a quantitative measure of the type of motivation participants were actively using. I adapted Yun, Takeuchi, and Liu's (2007) six item ($\alpha = .82$) self-enhancement motives scale to assess the participants' motivations during the study. For example, the item "I intend to change my behaviors to create a good impression to others" was changed to "I intended to change my behavior to create a good impression to others during the study".

Self-Verification Motivation. The same adaptation from the self-enhancement scale was used to adapt Cable and Kay's (2012) self-verification scale. Items such as "It's worth it to be truthful with others about my habits and personality so that they know what they expect from me" were adapted to "I was truthful with others about my habits and personality so that they knew what to expect from me". Three items were dropped due to an inability to adapt to measure state motivation (rather than trait-like tendencies) for a total of five items ($\alpha = .91$).

State Authenticity. It is obviously ideal to measure dependent variables objectively, however, authentic behavior cannot be operationalized or categorized objectively because authenticity is different for each person. Authenticity must necessarily be judged by the individuals themselves, as they are the only ones capable of comparing their behavior to their core self. In this study, I measured state authenticity (i.e. authenticity during the study) in two ways. The first is a single-item pictorial scale called the Real-Self Overlap Scale (RSOS; Lenton, Slabu, Bruder, & Sedikides, 2014) to assess the feeling of authenticity. The multiple-choice question features six pairs of circles that vary in their degree of overlap ranging from complete overlap to complete separation. One circle represents “who you were in the study” (adapted from “who you are right now”) and one circle represents “your real self (i.e. who you truly are)”. The form is meant to measure the extent to which participants feel closest to their true self.

The second measure of authenticity was an adapted version of the I AM Work scale (van den Bosch & Taris, 2014). Rather than choosing a pre-existing measure of state authenticity, I chose to adapt the IAM Work Scale because other scales do not follow the same three-factor structure of authenticity as van den Bosch and Taris (2014) did when creating a scale based on Wood et al.’s (2008) measure and conceptualization of trait authenticity. To keep in line with the conceptual nature and established psychometric properties of the trait measure of authenticity, I chose two items from each of the three sub-dimensions that easily translated into a six item ($\alpha = .82$) state measure. A confirmatory factor analysis confirmed that a hierarchical model still fit the data the exact same as using a three-factor model for this shortened version, RMSEA = .07, CFI = .99, SRMR = .02.

State Ingratiation. To measure whether participants perceived themselves as performing ingratiation behaviors, I used adapted items from the MIBOS scale. The instructions changed to

“During the interaction with my coworker, I...”. Of the four dimensions of the scale, items about opinion conformity, self-presentation, and other-enhancement that were applicable to the situation were included for a total of 15 items ($\alpha = .95$). Favor rendering was generally not possible in the interaction except for the helping behaviors, which was measured as a dependent variable, so that dimension was not included in this study.

As with the trait ingratiation measure, ingratiation is thought to be insensitive to the specific tactic that is used. Indeed, past researchers have also used only some of the dimensions of the original four (Asadullah, et al., 2016; Sibunruang, et al., 2016). Results from a CFA confirmed that a hierarchical factor structure and a three-factor structure (without favor rendering) had exactly the same fit, RMSEA = .11, CFI = .91, SRMR = .06. Hence, a total ingratiation score was reported rather than the sub-dimensions.

Qualitative Responses. In addition to the perceptions that participants reported, I also coded the responses participants gave during the interactions with the virtual partner. A codebook is featured in Appendix I. I was particularly interested in if the participant decided to a) describe themselves in a way that aligns with the culture of the organization (i.e. authentic or professional), b) if they were in a taboo condition, address the taboo topic with their coworker c) express agreement or disagreement with the topic. Two coders viewed the qualitative responses and indicated if the participants engaged in the behaviors of interest (inter-rater agreement across codes = 86%). Any discrepancies were discussed before coming to a final judgment.

Helping Behavior. Helping behaviors were measured dichotomously. Originally, helping was going to be measured on a scale of 0-5 since those that opted to help the first time were provided with other opportunities to help. However, results showed that participants that helped the first time continued to help all 5 times or 4 times so the scale was not necessary. Helping

behaviors will furthermore be referring to a dichotomous choice where participants either helped or did not help.

Value Alignment. One self-developed item of value alignment was included to compare to answers given on the Political Attitudes Questionnaire. The question simply asks the degree to which the participant agrees with the opinions that were expressed by their coworker on a five-point scale of Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.

Affect towards Coworker. To supplement the helping variable, I also measured other types of relationship indicators by adapting the Positive Affective Regard scale to measure participant reactions to their coworker (Lin & Kwantes, 2015). I altered items such as “How much do you think the co-workers in the scenario would like Jamie?” to “How much did you like your coworker?”. Questions measured likeability, willingness to work together in the future, and the likelihood of offering help on job-related tasks in the future on a seven-point scale. I omitted a question about competence to avoid confounding thoughts about competence with likeability. In addition to these questions, I also added affective measures that would measure likeability and helping behaviors that were not task- or work-related. For example, “I would be friends with my coworker” and “I would help my coworker with a personal problem”. The five items together showed good internal consistency ($\alpha = .92$) and were all significantly correlated to each other (at the 0.01 level) so they were measured together for an adapted Positive Affective Regard scale.

Reactions to the Interaction. There are other possible factors of the experiment that may have influenced behavior. I measured the participant’s affective response to the interaction itself by asking participants to rate the pleasantness of their interaction on a scale of 1 (very unpleasant) to 5 (very pleasant) and their satisfaction with the interaction on a scale of 1 (very unsatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). It could be possible that people were not affected by what the

coworker said but were affected by other elements of the exchanged (e.g. timed blocks, not very personal, etc.). These two questions were combined to form a two-item scale ($\alpha = .86$).

Reactions to the Activity. Another potential influence on helping could be how the participant felt about the advertisement activity itself. The participant may have chosen not to help because they did not enjoy the activity or conversely, decided to help because they like the activity rather than basing the decision on the partner. Participants answered six questions related to their opinions of the activity on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Four of the questions asked about the enjoyment of the activity and were combined to make a scale of enjoyment ($\alpha = .85$). A sample item is “this activity was enjoyable”. Two of the questions asked about performance of the activity and were measured separately, as their alpha coefficient did not reflect good consistency between the items. The two items were “This activity was challenging for me” and “It took me longer than I expected to do this activity”. These measures were included as possible controls to be sure the effect of helping is not based on the activity.

Voluntary Interactions. Cyberball was also added as a behavioral measure of voluntary interactions with the coworker. The program was initially designed to manipulate interpersonal ostracism and acceptance but could also be used as a dependent measure of prejudice or discrimination, empathy, and altruism (Williams & Jarvis, 2006). In this experiment, it was used as a dependent variable that represents a relationship (or an intentional lack of a relationship) with the coworker. The game is made of four players, one of which is the participant and one that is his or her coworker. The participant is told that the other two players are other coworker teams that are doing the same activity. When the participant receives the ball, they have the opportunity to throw it to any of the other three people in their game. Each participant received the ball seven times, so there were seven opportunities to pass it to someone else when the game was

completed. Though there were no formal hypotheses, it was predicted that the participant would have some opinion of their coworker and treat them differently than the other two anonymous players in the game. While ingratiation and authenticity could both be positive responses, Cyberball served to potentially capture negative responses to taboo topics, such as purposeful exclusion. This data is analyzed as exploratory data.

Manipulation and Attention Checks. Following the page with all of the company information, participants are asked to identify the culture of the organization they are working for “to ensure [their] understanding of the company”. Towards the end of the study, participants were informed that the organization and their coworker were fictional and made for the study. Following that information, the participants were asked to identify which of the quotes presented had their fictional coworker stated during their conversation. Additionally, there were three attention check items for careless responding. One bogus item was included during their work activity (i.e. Please identify if you are an alien for the client on a scale of 1-10. For example, choose 9 if you are paying attention) and two other attention checks (i.e. Please choose Strongly Disagree for quality control) were placed in the survey questions.

RESULTS

Initial Analyses

Before analyzing the hypotheses, I cleaned the data, constructed scales, and recorded descriptive information. To clean the data, I eliminated unnecessary variables in the dataset and checked the qualitative answers for unreliable participants. For example, there were clearly participants that either did not speak English fluently or were robots, evidenced by their incoherent answers to the prompts. Six participants were removed due to their qualitative answers indicating unreliability. The data was further evaluated for careless responding using activity response times and attention checks. No participants were identified for careless responding using activity response times, as they all spent at least an appropriate amount of time on the manipulation material. Eighty-four percent of participants correctly responded to all three attention checks and 76% of participants correctly identified both manipulations. To create an exclusionary criterion, I created a scale using the combined score of the attention checks and manipulation checks. Ten participants were eliminated for getting two or less checks correct (three of which had already been removed for unreliable qualitative answers), resulting in a total of 268 participants. Though further analyses showed that including the careless responders did not impact the significance of the results, they were still not included in the analyses.

To construct the scales, I reverse-coded the necessary items and then constructed composite scores and sub scores. The reliability of each scale is presented with the descriptive data in Table 2 which includes the means, standard deviations, alphas, and bivariate correlations for the independent variables (the scales used to measure them, not the conditions), control variables, and dependent variables. As predicted, the trait measure of ingratiation at work was correlated with ingratiation in the study, as was altruism. These measures were controlled for in

further analysis of state ingratiation. The trait measure of authenticity was correlated with both measures of state authenticity- recall I am using an adapted version of the IAM Work Scale and the Real Self Overlap Scale (RSOS)- as well as agreeableness and self-monitoring. When analyzing both measures of state authenticity, trait authenticity, agreeableness, and self-monitoring were used as controls. There were also some demographic variables that related to these outcomes. The frequency of attendance at religious services and the amount that a participant worked with others were correlated with state ingratiation. Age, race, and religious attendance were correlated with state authenticity. None of these demographics were included in the analyses because they were not theoretically relevant. Additional analyses did confirm that the inclusion of these variables did not change the overall results presented below.

The interaction itself was significantly correlated with state ingratiation and the IAM Work Scale of state authenticity. Participants generally rated the interaction positively ($M=4.00$, $SD=.81$). I initially included this as a control but after realizing it did not affect the significance of the models, I excluded it from the models as it is not theoretically relevant.

The rating of the advertisement activity was correlated with helping. Participants generally rated the activity low in enjoyment ($M=2.97$, $SD=.72$) on a 5-point scale from 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree. The difficulty level of the activity was also rated low ($M=2.72$, $SD=1.24$) indicating that it was not difficult, but participants were neutral about if the activity as took longer than expected ($M=3.21$, $SD=1.34$). Difficulty and time expectations were not significantly correlated with helping. Since the rating of the activity was not theoretically relevant and the inclusion of this variable as a control did not change the outcome of the analyses, it was not included in the analyses.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypotheses 1 and 2. H1 and H2 hypothesized that there was a positive relationship between motivation (self-enhancement vs. self-verification) and the behavior presented during the interaction (ingratiation vs. authenticity) (see Table 3 for means and standard deviations). These hypotheses were analyzed in two distinct ways. In the first method, I used the manipulated motivation conditions for the analysis. In H1 I used analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) to see if participants in the self-enhancement motivation condition reported more state ingratiation than those in the self-verification condition. Controlling for trait ingratiation and altruism, results for H1 showed participants in the self-enhancement condition did not report more state ingratiation $F(1, 267) = .75, MSE = .44, p > .05, ns$. Further analyses showed that even without both control measures, the motivation manipulation was not significant. H1 was not supported using this method of analyses.

A multiple analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was used for H2 to see if participants in the self-verification condition reported more state authenticity than participants in the self-enhancement condition. Controlling for trait authenticity, agreeableness, and self-monitoring, results for H2 showed that participants in the self-verification condition did not report more state authenticity with the IAM Work scale, $F(1, 256) = 2.38, MSE = 1.01, p > .05, ns$ but there was a significant difference in reporting for the RSOS, $F(1, 256) = 5.63, MSE = 10.81, p < .05$ such that those in the self-verification condition reported being closer to one's self than those in the self-enhancement condition. Using this method of analyses, H2 is supported when the RSOS is the dependent variable for state authenticity.

In the second method for analyzing H1 and H2, I used the self-reported motivation of the participants rather than the manipulated conditions. I used hierarchical linear regression for H1 to

test if reported self-enhancement motivations predicted state ingratiation behavior and for H2 to test if reported self-verification motivations predicted state authenticity (see Tables 4 and 5). For H1, I entered trait ingratiation and altruism as controls in block one and self-enhancement in block two. There was a significant change in R^2 , $p < .01$ and the model accounted for 42% of the variance in state ingratiation behavior. Self-enhancement significantly predicted impression management behaviors $\beta = .31$, $t(267) = 5.56$, $p < .01$. For H2, I conducted two regressions using the IAM Work scale for the dependent variable in one model and the RSOS for the dependent variable in another model. Both models included trait authenticity, agreeableness and self-monitoring entered as controls in the first block and then self-verification motivation in the second block. The regression using the IAM Work Scale as the dependent variable showed a significant change in R^2 , $p < .01$, accounting for 44% of the variance in state authenticity and self-verification was a significant predictor of state authenticity, $\beta = .37$, $t(261) = 6.89$, $p < .01$. The regression using the RSOS as the dependent variable accounted for about 20% of the variance and a significant change in R^2 , $p < .01$, with self-verification significantly predicting state authenticity $\beta = .30$, $t(261) = 4.65$, $p < .01$. Using the continuous measures of motivation, both H1 and H2 were supported.

Hypothesis 3. Hypothesis 3a and 3b hypothesized interactions between the main effect of motivation (H3a: self-enhancement; H3b: self-verification) and the main effect of the topic of the interaction as taboo or neutral. I used ANCOVA in H3a to see if participants in the self-enhancement motivation and taboo conditions reported more state ingratiation than those in other conditions. As mentioned above, initial analyses analyzed the different taboo conditions separately to see if there may be a difference between the topics but once no significant differences were found, all of the taboo topics were combined for comparison against the neutral

topic. Controlling for trait ingratiation and altruism, results of the interaction were non-significant $F(1, 267) = .46, MSE = .63, p > .05, ns$. For hypothesis 3b, I again used MANCOVA to see if participants in the self-verification motivation and taboo conditions reported more state authenticity than those in other conditions using both the IAM Work Scale and the RSOS controlling for trait authenticity, agreeableness, and self-monitoring. Results were non-significant for both the IAM Work Scale $F(1, 262) = .11, MSE = .05, p > .05, ns$ and the RSOS $F(1, 262) = .67, MSE = 1.29, p > .05, ns$. H3a and H3b were not supported using this method of analysis.

I also analyzed these hypotheses using the self-enhancement and self-verification scales rather than using the manipulations as I did with H1 and H2. For H3a I used a hierarchical linear regression inputting the controls in the first block, the main effects of self-enhancement and topic type (taboo vs. neutral) in the second block, and the interaction between self-enhancement and topic type in the third block, shown in Table 6. There was virtually no change in R^2 from the second model to the third model, with $\Delta R^2 = .000, p > .05$. I ran two different hierarchical linear regressions for H3b first using the IAM Work scale as the dependent variable and then using the RSOS (see Tables 7 and 8). For both models the controls were entered in the first block, the main effects of self-verification and topic type in the second block, and the interaction between self-verification and topic type in the third block. In the first regression using the IAM Work Scale, there was not a significant change in R^2 for the model including the interaction, $\Delta R^2 = .01, p > .05$. The same was also true for the regression using the RSOS, with $\Delta R^2 = .00, p > .05$. H3a and H3b were not supported using this method; therefore, there was no support for either hypothesis.

Hypothesis 4. It is important to note that there was a low overall base rate of helping. Of all 268 participants, 20 (7.5%) helped their coworker. When looking at frequency by condition,

between 0% (e.g. 0 helped out of 28) and 12.5% (e.g. 3 helped out of 24) of participants in the respective conditions helped. H4 predicted that more state ingratiation behaviors would lead to more helping behaviors. I used binary logistic regression to estimate the predictive ability of state ingratiation for helping behavior. Though trait ingratiation and altruism were not related to helping behavior, I continued to use them as controls because of their influence on exhibited ingratiation behavior in the study. Shown in Table 9, the controls were entered first, and then ingratiation in the second block. Although the overall model was significant, $\chi^2 = 16.54$, $p < .01$, a chi-squared difference test suggested that the overall model was not significantly different than the first model with only the control variables ($\chi^2_d = 1.093$). Further, state ingratiation behaviors were not a significant predictor of helping behaviors $b = .30$, Wald (1, 268) = 1.10, $p > .05$. H4 was not supported.

Hypothesis 5. Hypothesis 5 predicts a three-way interaction between state authenticity, topic type, and value alignment such that participants that have misaligned values with their coworker when talking about taboo topics will not provide help at low or high levels of state authenticity. I used hierarchical binary logistic regression to test this hypothesis in two models, first using the IAM Work Scale (see Table 10) and then using the RSOS (see Table 11). The overall model using the IAM Work scale was not a good fit, $\chi^2 = 11.31$, $p > .05$. Neither the main effects nor the interaction were significant predictors of helping behavior. The overall model using the RSOS also did not have good fit, $\chi^2 = 11.24$, $p > .05$ and the interaction did not significantly predict helping behaviors. H5 was not supported.

Exploratory Analyses

Qualitative Data. In order to further investigate how participants behaved during the interaction with coworkers, I coded their qualitative interactions. I measured how similar their behavior was

to their motivation condition by recording how often the participant described themselves in the same terms given in the description of their company- as professional or authentic. Similar to helping behavior, the qualitative data showed that participants only described themselves as authentic or professional a small percentage of the time (see Table 12 for the frequency, means and standard deviations for how participants described themselves and refer to Appendix I for an explanation of the coding). I used logistic regression to analyze motivation and the topic type (dichotomous as taboo or neutral) as predictors for the frequency in which participants described themselves as professional or authentic. Neither motivation (professional: $b = .62$, Wald (1, 268) = .50, $p > .05$, *ns*; authentic: , $b = -.88$, Wald (1, 268) = 2.96, $p > .05$, *ns*) or topic type (professional: $b = .98$, Wald (1, 268) = 1.40, $p > .05$, *ns*; authentic: , $b = -.01$, Wald (1, 268) = .00, $p > .05$, *ns*) produced any significant results, though only six participants (2.20%) described themselves as professional and 19 (7.09%) participants described themselves as authentic so there is likely not enough variance for this finding to be meaningful or informative. I also considered the self-reported motivations and used logistic regression to test self-enhancement and self-verification as predictors of professional and authentic descriptions. Self-enhancement (professional: $b = -.39$, Wald (1, 268) = 1.34, $p > .05$, *ns*; authentic: , $b = .22$, Wald (1, 268) = 1.14, $p > .05$, *ns*) and self-verification (professional: $b = .09$, Wald (1, 268) = .62 $p > .05$, *ns*; authentic: , $b = .16$, Wald (1, 268) = .38, $p > .05$, *ns*) were not significant predictors.

I was also interested to learn if there was a pattern of qualitative entries in response to taboo topics. Specifically, I was interested in knowing if people in the taboo conditions differentially responded to their coworker depending on their motivation (both manipulated and self-reported) and their value alignment. Since we do not know what type of behaviors people interpret as authentic (because everyone's "true self" is different), I thought this line of inquiry

could also inform the literature if those that felt more authentic behaved in similar ways to each other. The degree to which participants' values aligned with the expressed opinion in the taboo could also determine whether they address the taboo, especially if they strongly agree or strongly disagreed. Recall that value alignment was a single item of agreement with the coworker, on a scale of 1- Strongly Agree to 5- Strongly Disagree with an option for 0, which indicates that the participant did not perceive their coworker as expressing an opinion. Though all the topics were framed as opinions, those that choose 0 could have interpreted the topic as interests rather than an opinion because of the framing (i.e. I like to talk about rights). Lastly, I was interested to see if certain taboos provoked a response more than others or if value alignment alone was more important. I coded individuals' responses to taboo as either addressed it or did not address it. However, I found that participants would also indirectly acknowledge the taboo by talking about similar topics or by clarifying their respect for opinions (see Table 13 for means and standard deviations by condition; see Table 14 for means and standard deviations by value alignment). For example, shown in Appendix I is the following response to the prolife taboo topic "You should know that I am a raging feminist and a fierce liberal democrat. I despise people who voted for Donald Trump.". While there is no direct reference to abortion, the coders interpreted that response to be a reaction to the taboo which was expressed by talking about similar topics. An example of clarifying respect for opinions can be seen in the following response "I generally like to keep an open mind about people and their beliefs and feelings though I do not stand for hatefulness or individuals who are hurtful.". The coders found that this type of response often occurred after the topic was expressed (as opposed to being freely offered before the topic was expressed) so it was interpreted as another indirect response to taboo.

To test if (manipulated) motivation, topic, and value alignment could predict the frequency of the three types of responses (directly addressing taboo, discussing similar topics, mention of opinions), I used logistic regression with a separate model for each technique. Only the model with similar topics as a dependent variable (see Table 15) had significant predictors: value alignment, $b = -.41$, Wald (1, 268) = 8.83, $p < .01$, and topic type $b = -.227$, Wald (1, 268) = 4.81, $p < .05$. To find out how the level of value alignment and type of topic differed in frequency of qualitative responses expressing similar topics, I did two follow-up logistic regressions that compared the categories to each other. I found that for value alignment, those that strongly disagreed were significantly more likely to respond to a topic by mentioning similar topics than those that indicated any other level of value alignment. For the topic type, those in the taboo conditions were much more likely to respond to the topic by mentioning similar topics. I then used logistic regression to test the predictive ability of self-enhancement and self-verification for these three techniques. Self-verification was a significant predictor of mentioning opinions in general, $b = .98$ Wald (1, 267) = 4.71, $p > .05$ (see Table 16).

Cyberball. Cyberball was meant to serve as another behavioral dependent variable that would show how an employee's behavior would change as a result of a taboo interaction. Though no hypotheses were made, it was expected that Cyberball results would display a similar pattern to helping behavior. Because of the integration of Cyberball into Qualtrics, the game was set up such that participants could advance through the survey without completing the full activity. I have data from 158 (59%) participants that did the activity to completion, which allowed me to match their Cyberball data (collected through another system) to the data in Qualtrics. The means and standard deviations of completion rates by condition are in Table 17. Using logistic regression to see if there were differences between conditions for those that

completed the Cyberball activity and those that did not (completion is the dependent, dichotomous variable), I found that taboo significantly predicted Cyberball completion, $b = .182$, Wald (1, 268) = 4.10, $p < .05$ (see Table 18). Pairwise comparisons suggest that those in the Prolife topic condition ($M = .47$, $SD = .50$) completed Cyberball significantly less than those in the Neutral topic condition ($M = .67$, $SD = .47$) with a mean difference of .20, $p < .05$. I also examined the effects of the continuous self-verification and self-enhancement variables on Cyberball completion using logistic regression for differences in motivation. They did not predict completion.

Next, I wanted to see if there were differences between conditions using the number of times the participants threw the ball to their coworker on a scale of 0 to 7 (see Table 19 for means and standard deviations). It should be noted that the following analyses were completed using a subset of the sample- those that completed Cyberball ($N=157$). Using ANOVA, neither the motivation, $F(1, 157) = .05$, $MSE = .08$, $p > .05$, *ns* or topic type $F(1, 157) = 1.05$, $MSE = 1.85$, $p > .05$, *ns* manipulations predicted the number of times the participants threw the ball to their coworker. Regression analysis for the self-enhancement and self-verification measures were not significant for the number of throws either. Lastly, I used the number of throws to the coworker as a dependent variable in Hypotheses 1-5. The only significant result was for H3a, which hypothesized that the interaction between self-reported self-enhancement motivation and topic type would interact such that self-enhancement would be more strongly related to the outcome (in this case, ball tosses) if there was a taboo topic compared to a neutral topic. In the model (see Table 20), self-enhancement ($\beta = .26$, $t(157) = 2.49$, $p < .05$), topic type ($\beta = .79$, $t(157) = 2.67$, $p < .01$), and the interaction term ($\beta = -.49$, $t(157) = -2.40$, $p < .05$) were all significant predictors of how often participants threw the ball to their coworker. Figure 7 shows

the relationship between self-enhancement and ball tosses for those in a taboo condition versus a neutral condition. I used simple slopes analyses to indicate the significance of the slopes (Aiken & West, 1991). When the participant had a neutral topic, there was a significant, positive relationship between self-enhancement and ball tosses, $t(157) = 2.52, p < .01$. Comparatively, when the participant had a taboo topic, there was a non-significant negative relationship between self-enhancement and ball tosses, $t(157) = -1.0, p > .05$. This relationship differs greatly from the predictions of H3a. Instead of seeing a significant difference between those in the taboo condition at low and high levels of self-enhancement, there is a significant difference between those in the neutral condition at low and high levels of self-enhancement. Participants in the low self-enhancement condition with a taboo topic still threw the ball to their coworker more than those in the low self-enhancement condition with a neutral topic. It seems individuals tend to exhibit more behaviors that would make them seem likeable regardless of the level of motivation if they are in a taboo condition. H3a was significant using ball tosses as a dependent variable but not in the expected direction; H3a was not supported.

Affective Responses. Helping behaviors are thought to stem from social support and positive coworker relationships (Chou & Stauffer, 2016; Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008). Without proposing any specific hypotheses, I was interested in exploring the part that affect plays in determining both behavior during the interaction with the coworker (specifically after the taboo or neutral topic has been revealed) and helping behavior in a later task. Taboo may have important implications for shaping positive coworker relationships and future behavior in a way that is not evident through the measurement of helping behaviors. To explore how taboo may help to influence these relationships, I examined affective differences between conditions and affect's relationship to helping behaviors.

I first considered how motivation and topic type shape an employee's affective responses to and future intentions with their coworker with the adapted Positive Affective Regard Scale. To review, this scale had two items about general likeability (e.g. How much did you like your coworker?), one item about willingness to work together in the future (e.g. How willing would you be to work with your coworker on future assignments or projects?), and two items about willingness to help this coworker (e.g. How willing would you be to help your coworker on job-related tasks...?). Since likeability is the key component of affect, Using ANOVA, I found that the taboo conditions had significantly different affective ratings $F(1, 267) = 8.00$, $MSE = 5.79$, $p < .01$ (see Table 21 for means and standard deviations), but there was no difference between motivation conditions. Specifically, Tukey's post-hoc analyses showed that the same-sex marriage conservative view topic ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 1.17$) was rated significantly lower in affect than all other topics except for the prolife abortion topic.

To consider whether the influence of the topic on affect was due to value alignment, I used ANOVA to analyze the differences between affect for the topic type, value alignment, and the interaction between topic type and value alignment. Value alignment had a main effect on affect, ratings $F(1, 267) = 9.55$, $MSE = 4.87$, $p < .01$ but the interaction between taboo and value alignment was not significant. Tukey's post-hoc analyses determined that affect was significantly different between all of the categories except for those that disagreed and those that were neutral and between those that agreed and those that were neutral. Those that chose 0 were significantly different from all categories except for those that agreed or strongly agreed, suggesting that not perceiving any opinions has a similar effect as perceiving value alignment with a topic (see Table 22 for means and standard deviations).

Next, I considered how affect is related to helping behaviors. Logistic regression determined that affect is a significant predictor of helping behavior, $b = 2.46$, $Wald = 13.61$, $p < .01$, with the model fitting significantly well, $\chi^2 = 25.04$, $p < .01$ (see Table 23). Because taboo predicted affect and affect predicted helping, I also tested a mediation model with affect mediating the relationship between topic type and helping. I used the PROCESS macro version 2.16.3 in SPSS (Hayes, 2018) to perform mediation analyses with the bootstrap estimation approach for a dichotomous outcome variable. The indirect effect of taboo on helping with a 5000-bootstrap sample corrected for bias was not significant, $z(268) = 1.75$, $p > .05$. There is no support for affect as a mediator between taboo and helping. Considering affect was a significant predictor of helping and was also significantly related to value alignment, I tested a second model using the same method of value alignment mediating the effect of affect on helping. The indirect effect of value alignment on helping was not significant, $z(268) = -1.23$, $p > .05$. There was no evidence for value alignment as a mediator to helping.

Lastly, I considered the relationship between affect and the exploratory activity of Cyberball. Logistic regression showed that affect did not predict the completion of Cyberball. Further, I used linear regression to predict ball tosses to the coworker in Cyberball using affect. Affect was not a significant predictor of tosses to the coworker, $\beta = -.020$, $t(157) = -.25$, $p > .05$.

DISCUSSION

Summary of Findings

The present study sought to be a first investigation of how taboo topics may affect behavior in organizations within the context of two opposing motivations. Given its potential to lead to unwanted conflict, I examined the effect of taboo on coworker relationships represented by the important organizational behavior of helping. Results showed that motivation implicit within organizational culture influenced one measure of state authenticity during the interaction with the coworker (the RSOS) but not the other (the IAM Work Scale) and did not influence state ingratiation during the interaction with the coworker. The reason for the discrepancy between the two authenticity measures is not clear but perhaps the nature of the measures produced different reactions. The RSOS used a pictorial representation of feeling authentic, which may have been easier to understand than the questions on the IAM Work scale. Self-perceived motivation, on the contrary, significantly influenced behavior such that individuals that reported high self-enhancement engaged in more ingratiation and individuals that reported high self-verification engaged in more authentic behaviors during the interaction with the coworker. While the goal of the manipulation was to induce a state motivation, it is possible that the manipulation was not strong enough to override individual state motivations in participants. Another explanation, though more improbable, is that an organization with a culture of authenticity that encourages self-verification or a culture of impression management that encourages self-enhancement do not impact behavior as much as an individual's state motivation will impact their behavior. Individual motivation leading to the associated behavior (self-enhancement to ingratiation and self-verification to authenticity) aligns with previous research in this area (e.g. Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Swann, et al., 1989), so this is an overall unsurprising finding.

When comparing groups that experienced a taboo interaction to those that experienced a neutral interaction, the relationships between motivation (self-enhancement or self-verification) and behavior during the interaction (ingratiation or authenticity) were not significantly different. This non-finding suggests that an individual continues to behave in line with their motivations, even in the face of a taboo conversation. One of the unknown factors of taboo was how employees would behave in the interaction, particularly compared to their motivations. It was expected that a taboo topic would derail a person's behavior during a conversation such that they would act differently than their intended motivation. Participants continuing to act in alignment with their motivations while interacting with the other person is useful insight for understanding taboo.

The results for helping behaviors were less insightful for taboo topics, particularly because of the low base rate of participants that helped. It is not likely that I am able to draw meaningful conclusions because of the lack of variance. I did not find that behaviors during the interaction related to later helping behaviors. Neither higher ingratiation nor higher authenticity led to more helping. For authenticity, it was hypothesized that the relationship between state authenticity and helping could be moderated by the topic type and value alignment, which was also not supported. The lack of relationships to helping could have several interpretations, assuming there was enough power to detect an effect. For example, it is possible that participants did not consider helping behaviors to be ingratiating or authentic behavior and, therefore, behavioral consistency was not apparent or necessary. Past research would suggest that helping is in the realm of ingratiation (i.e. favor rendering; Kumar & Beyerlein, 1991) and may be in the realm of self-verification if helping is a part of the person's self-concept (Goldman & Kernis, 2002). Nevertheless, participants may have had an easier time enacting their "true self" in

conversation with someone (i.e. authenticity during the interaction) than in helping someone else.

The qualitative analyses give some insight into what was considered authentic behavior during the interaction with the coworker. Namely, self-reported self-verification predicted that participants would respond to the taboo and results suggested that individuals responded to taboo significantly more than neutral topics, which was expected. Self-verification in particular predicted the strategy of acknowledging the coworker's expressed opinion by talking about opinions in general. For example, higher self-verification led to more responses such as "I generally like to keep an open mind about people and their beliefs and feelings". This strategy, whether meant to acknowledge value alignment or misalignment, is the most indirect technique that was coded compared to directly acknowledging the taboo or talking about similar topics. Perhaps the encouragement to be authentic led participants to accept their coworker being their true self (mentioning the taboo) without the need to directly address it and instead reaffirm their right to an opinion. Value alignment was another significant predictor of responses to taboo such that those that strongly disagreed were more likely to respond. Value alignment also predicted the strategy of bringing up similar topics in response to taboo. It is interesting that those on the opposite end of the spectrum- participants that strongly agreed- did not also engage in these techniques. There may be an asymmetrical nature to taboo such that taboo is only disruptive or invoking when the person strongly disagrees. Participant's own perceptions of their behavior during this interaction as ingratiating or authentic did not reflect a disruption in later helping behavior.

While self-verification was a significant factor in predicting qualitative responses, self-enhancement was a significant factor in the exploratory analyses of ball tosses in Cyberball.

Cyberball showed significant differences in the relationship between self-enhancement motivation and ball tosses when an individual was involved in a taboo interaction. Those in the taboo condition did not throw the ball differently at low and high levels of self-enhancement but those in the neutral condition showed a significant positive relationship between self-enhancement and ball tosses. The stated hypothesis was not supported because of the prediction of the significance of levels of motivation. The underlying expectations for taboo, however, are supported from this conclusion. I predicted that individuals are more likely to ingratiate (but here, toss the ball) when there is a taboo topic because they have to work harder to be seen as likeable compared to a non-taboo topic. Instead of this being especially evident during high motivation conditions, results showed this difference during low motivation conditions. There are two post-hoc explanations for those that experienced a taboo in a high self-enhancement condition not tossing the ball to their coworker. First, one can consider that a low toss to the coworker means that the participant tossed the ball to other players more often. Those in the neutral condition at low self-enhancement did not feel motivated to be seen as likeable to anyone in particular, and thus tossed the ball more equally. In the neutral condition at high self-enhancement, they would have felt more motivated to be seen as liked by their coworker and therefore tossed the ball more to them. For the taboo condition at both low and high self-enhancement, the participant may have felt a greater need to ingratiate by interacting with the person because of the taboo topic. An alternative explanation offers a reason why there were not differences between those in the taboo condition for low and high levels of self-enhancement. A violation of norms (i.e. work appropriate topics) may signal that the other person has a low level of motivation to self-enhance and is not putting in the work to also ingratiate, so an individual at

high levels of self-enhancement does not feel more obligated to toss the ball than at low levels of self-enhancement.

Additionally, the topic type predicted whether participants completed the activity in the first place; those with the prolife topic in particular participated less. Withdrawing from this activity may indicate a different type of behavior in response to taboo. In the workplace, withdrawal behaviors may be detrimental for both employees and organizations. It was also interesting that while the topic type predicted Cyberball completion, value alignment did not predict either completion or ball tosses to the coworker. The evaluation of the topic (through value alignment) did not create the difference, rather, the impact of the taboo itself as a violation of workplace norms caused the difference.

Cyberball completion and ball tosses to the coworker can be contrasted to helping behaviors to differentiate between the types of behavior that motivation and taboo might affect. At first, a viable conclusion or why participants did not help their coworker was because it took more time of their time and moving on to the next step would give them less work for their compensation. However, 20 people chose to help their coworker, yet 158 participants took the time to complete Cyberball. Time was not likely the incentive to help or not help. Cyberball was framed as a relaxing and more passive activity that required less attention and was not framed as work. Specifically, the activity was framed as an activity to “clear your mind” before engaging in more work. That could be interpreted as a time-wasting activity or relaxation activity, unlike helping the coworker which the participant knew was a work activity. Tossing the ball during Cyberball may be representative of passive but interactive activities like sharing information or resources in the workplace, or interactions that are relaxation-oriented like engaging in watercooler conversations at work.

Though Cyberball was a passive activity, there was still subtle interaction with the coworker. Helping behaviors were direct involvement with the coworker while throwing the ball to the coworker was much more indirect. Perhaps the affect of taboo and motivation on employees' relationship with their coworkers is in the subtle interactions rather than the more apparent ones. A final possibility for finding differences in Cyberball but not helping is in the variance that this particular experiment was able to capture. As previously discussed, helping was a one time, dichotomous option for the participant and only a small percentage helped. Compared to the seven times that participants (that completed Cyberball) received, the one time offers much smaller variance.

Unlike the main constructs of interest, exploratory analyses showed that affect towards the coworker did predict helping behaviors. Even though there were significant differences in affect between those that experienced a taboo interaction compared to those that did not, affect did not mediate the relationship between topic type and helping. The low base rate of helping may prevent a thorough analysis of the mediation. Still, taboo predicts affect and affect predicts helping behavior. Affect also affected helping behaviors independent of value alignment, even though value alignment predicted affect. Value alignment was not a significant mediator of helping behavior and affect. Finally, disparate from the topic type, affect was not a significant predictor of Cyberball completion or tosses to the coworker in Cyberball. Helping was assumed to be a behavioral indication of coworker relationships but affect is perhaps a more direct evaluation of coworker relationships that could predict helping behaviors as opposed to other types of behavior.

Essentially, there were different predictors for all of the outcomes of interests. Individual level motivation predicted behavior during the actual interaction (ingratiation or authenticity),

the topic type predicted Cyberball completion and the number of tosses to the coworker, and affect predicted helping behaviors. This study showed many meaningful relationships that are important to the workplace. While there is more work to be done to understand these relationships, the current work has made contributions to theory and practice.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Authenticity has been studied in regard to the effects for the individual's well-being, job and life meaningfulness, and work-related outcomes such as performance (Ilies, et al., 2005; Ménard & Brunet, 2011; Leroy, et. al, 2015). "Bringing your whole self to work" has become a common theme in practice, touting authenticity as an important element of organizational culture. However, the current literature and business models have not yet addressed what kinds of behaviors and outcomes result from authenticity as a framework for culture, particularly in the context of a social situation. The evidence from this study suggests authenticity as a framework for culture may have some implications for the degree to which employees report "feeling themselves" in a dyadic interaction at work compared to a different type of company culture (i.e. culture of impression management). While they may feel more authentic, the findings do not show support for feeling authentic meaning that an individual feels more positively towards coworkers or behave in more prosocial ways.

A theoretical clarification that is important for both theory and practice is the distinction between internal and external motivation to be or feel authentic. The differences between external motivation (e.g. motivation from the organization) and internal motivation (e.g. individual level motivation) are interesting insights that would prove useful when establishing organizational culture and considering person-organization fit. The present investigation suggests that individual level motivation to be authentic has a greater impact on perceptions of social

behavior and the type of strategies used during conversation. Not only are individuals more likely to perceive themselves as authentic, but they are also more likely to signal to others that they are accepting of authenticity when they report self-verification. Regardless of the source of authenticity, topics like politics and religion may be welcomed into the organization just like talk of sports and pets without affecting employees' feelings of authenticity or authentic behavior. Yet, those same topics may cause negative affect which have the potential to influence behavior and coworker relationships overall. Lastly, more self-reported authenticity is not related to more helping behaviors in the workplace, even considering taboo topics and their associations with values. Alternatively, perhaps there are other important organizational outcomes that could be affected by authenticity.

The literature on impression management assumes that the individual has a motivation to self-enhance. For example, situations like a job interview can be assumed to elicit the motivation to present yourself well. This study explored impression management as an imbedded characteristic of the organization. Many organizations have this element of their culture, especially in client facing industries (Grandey, Foo, Groth, & Goodwin, 2011). I did not find, however, that encouraging self-enhancement through the company culture had an impact on individual's perceptions of their behavior during an interaction with a coworker. Instead, an individual's personal motivation to self-enhance predicted the impression management technique of interest, ingratiation. Just like with self-verification, internal motivation to self-enhance compared to external motivation to self-enhance is a practical distinction that should be used to further understand the construct of impression management. Similar to authenticity, taboo topics did not exert an effect on the relationship between self-enhancement motivation and ingratiation. Organizations may consider taboo topics harmless to normal dyadic interactions. However, I did

find that taboo topics cause differing behaviors when choosing to interact with a coworker, seen in the Cyberball task. Further research in this area could clarify the conceptual or practical difference between the tasks evaluated in this study before making practical recommendations.

I integrate taboo into the existing literature by considering its impact on the relationship between motivation and behavior, and the relationship between behavior during a dyadic interaction and helping behaviors for that same person. The non-effect of taboo makes it non-distinct from other topics of conversation in the workplace. It is not evident from the present study if taboo topics create different behaviors in people that are trying to maintain a certain demeanor (e.g. those that are self-enhancing want to maintain a positive image) but based on self-reported perceptions of behavior, they do not appear to differ. Qualitative data also suggests that high self-enhancers react differently to taboo than low self-enhancers. However, taboo topics do seem to negatively impact an employee's affect towards the person that brought up the taboo. This finding suggests that taboo topics, at the very least, provoke some type of emotion that diverges from normal topics. Whether that provocation deems it conceptually different or not could have important implications for the further development of theory about difficult topics and practical implications for coworker relationships. Practitioners can regard taboo topics as lacking the power to disrupt workplace behavior but heed the potential for them to alter interpersonal relationships in the workplace.

Limitations

As a first undertaking to the conceptualization of taboo into organizational science, the present study aspired to embed taboo within the extant literature given its potential to cause changes in organizations. While many main points were addressed, this research was necessarily bounded in an attempt to identify the most important features of taboo. The experimental design

of the current study allowed the examination of several constructs, such as motivation, while keeping other factors constant, such the nature of the interaction or the opportunity to help. However, this design does not allow for the understanding of a great variety of ways that taboo topics may play out in organizations. First, the “organization” that participants worked in was of weak situational strength and possibly did not meet the threshold for impact. Employees working within an organization with palpable culture may experience a much stronger situational influence that could not be provided in this study. Second, the present study only considered a dyadic relationship between people that do not have a previous relationship. The experimental design could not provide any insight into how taboo topics may affect existing relationships or ongoing relationships. Existing positive, negative, or neutral relationships may be affected differently when taboo topics comes up. Further, coworkers with rapport may share information that provide insights into deep level values without talking about taboo. In that way employees would be knowledgeable about the appropriateness to discuss a taboo topic with their coworkers. Taboo topics may also interfere in different ways when employees know there is a lasting relationship that must be maintained. The results suggested that the taboo topics changed future behavioral intentions (i.e. if you would be willing to help this person in the future), but participants knew that they would not have any additional interactions with this person. Lastly, this was a study that was administered and completed online. Face to face interactions with a coworker may produce reactions that differ from what this online study was able to capture. Body language from the coworker that brings up the taboo topic may inform the focal employee’s reactions, and the absence of anonymity in a face to face interaction may influence behavior differently.

There were also limitations to the taboo topics themselves. The taboo topic opposing same-sex marriage was clearly the most disliked, reflecting a societal taboo. However, having the sample all feel the same way may not have positioned the study for the best interpretation of reactions to various types of taboo. There was more variance in the abortion topics and we did still view significant differences. I also underestimated the complexities of concluding objective value alignment in regard to the topics. While I originally planned to compare reactions to the Political Questionnaire and obtain objective viewpoints (rather than reporting agreement after the taboo), I later found it difficult to cleanly align opinions with both the prompts and the Likert scale of self-reported agreement. The nuance in values was also reflected in qualitative data, such that people would express more detail than just agreeing or disagreeing. For example, in response to the prochoice abortion topic, a participant stated “I too believe women should have the option over their own bodies, however I don't want abortion to be available all the time for just young girls who use it as a form of birth control. And I definitely think there should be a limit on how far into the pregnancy you can terminate.”. This person expressed a complex view of abortion that would probably require more probing or a tool more intricate than a Likert scale to measure values or value alignment.

Future Directions

Taboo can be further conceptualized for integration into organizational research by focusing on several additional factors that could not be investigated in this study. For example, the present study had one focal employee and tried to understand their reaction to another person. The nature of a dyadic interaction in the real world would certainly be more multifaceted and evolving, given the reciprocal exchange of a typical conversation. Perhaps an ongoing

conversation would provide important details that determine a person's true positive or negative evaluation of the situation.

Future research should also explore the context specific nature of taboo. The use of field studies in future research could provide the strong situational influence of context to evaluate a true taboo by choosing a topic that is known in that environment as inappropriate. It would also further inform the possible effects of authenticity and impression management imbedded within organizational culture. The present study does provide some evidence for the influence of external motivation on perceptions of behavior but understanding how behavior may differ within a strong situational influence would have far reaching theoretical and practical implications.

Another promising direction for this research is to incorporate time as a factor. Though participant behavior with their coworker did not seem to differ by topic, they did differ in their affect. A time-lagged design or experience sampling method may capture the evolution of a coworker relationship over time and the effect that a taboo topic has. Similar to other constructs (e.g. workplace bullying; Ballien, et al., 2017), taboo topics could have differing impact based on the frequency of occurrence, which could be captured by considering the dynamic nature of coworker relationships. This would be particularly relevant as related to events that occur in the immediate environment of the organization that is salient to employees but may be taboo. A different example besides the Presidential Election would be a law that is on the ballot, especially if it references a specific taboo topic (e.g. abortion laws).

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into a subject that was already infiltrating the workplace- taboo topics. I further placed taboo topics within the context of an organization

that motivates employees to either self-enhance or self-verify to evaluate the consequences of authentic behaviors compared to impression management behaviors in a dyadic exchange on the outcome of helping that same person later. The results provided by this study suggest that taboo topics do not affect perceptions of behaviors in an interaction with a coworker and the behaviors in the interaction have no bearing on helping behavior. Taboo does, however, impact affect in an unfavorable way. Motivation also influences the type of conversational strategies used to confront taboo during the interaction and voluntary interactions with the other person after the taboo interaction. I propose future researchers consider factors beyond the scope of the current study such as field studies that would be a stronger influence on participants. Although the topics that are considered taboo may change over time, it is important to understand how the nature of what is taboo at the moment can influence how coworkers feel about and relate to one another.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Figures and Tables

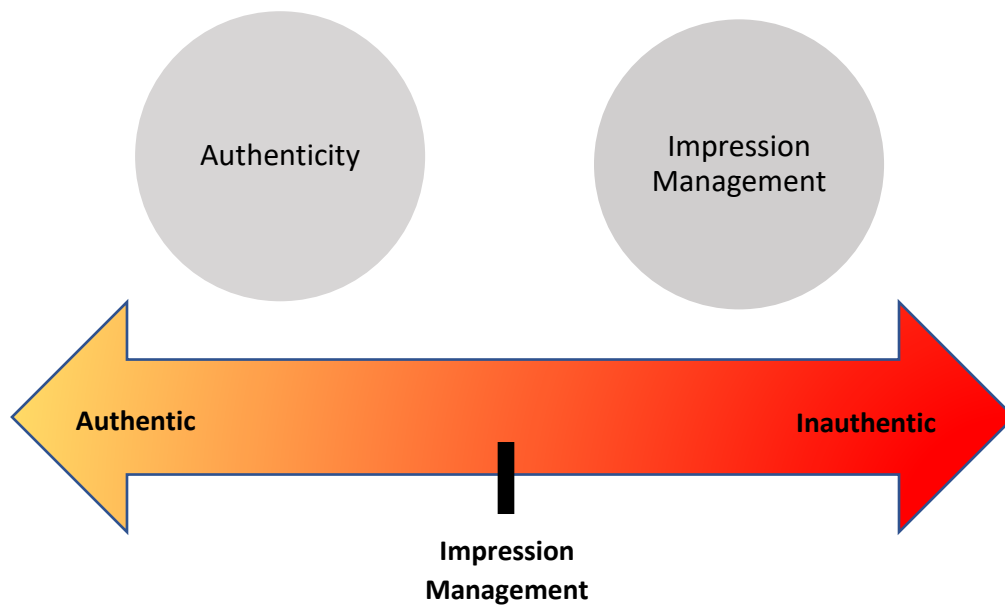


Figure 1. Graphical representations of authenticity and impression management.

The first graphical representation presents authenticity and impression management as two wholly different constructs. There is no overlap in their underlying psychological principles or behavioral display. The psychological implications of each are separate. The second representation presents impression management on a continuum of authenticity that ranges from completely authentic to completely inauthentic. The psychological implications that arise from impression management are due to their position on the authenticity continuum.

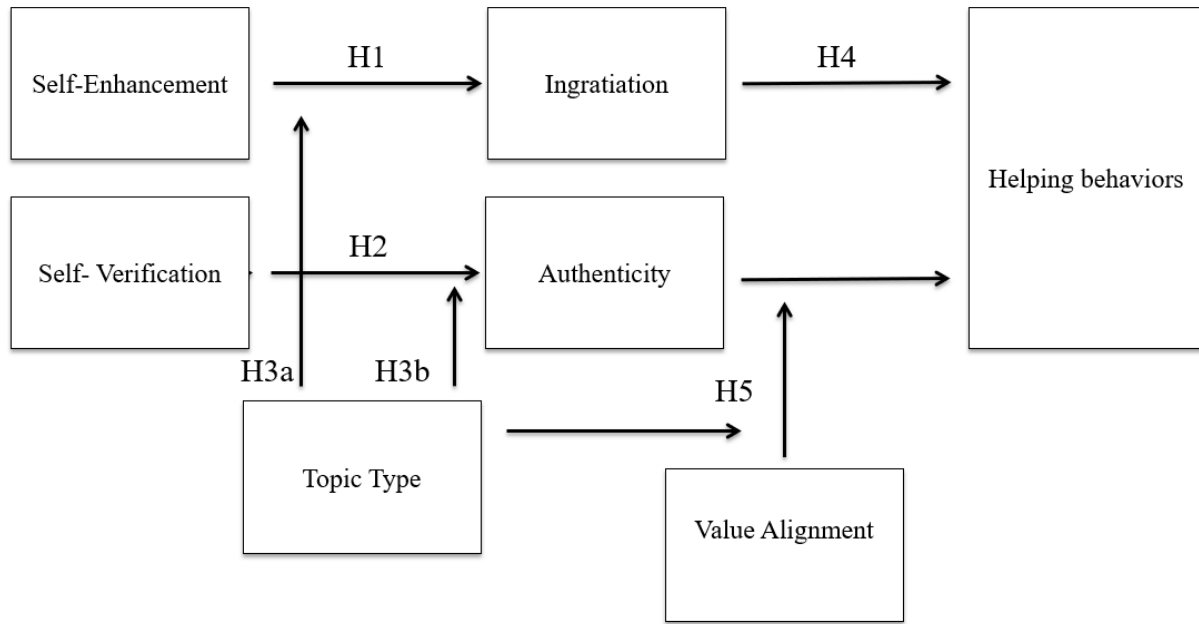


Figure 2. The Proposed Model of Motivation and Behavior in the Context of a Taboo Interaction.

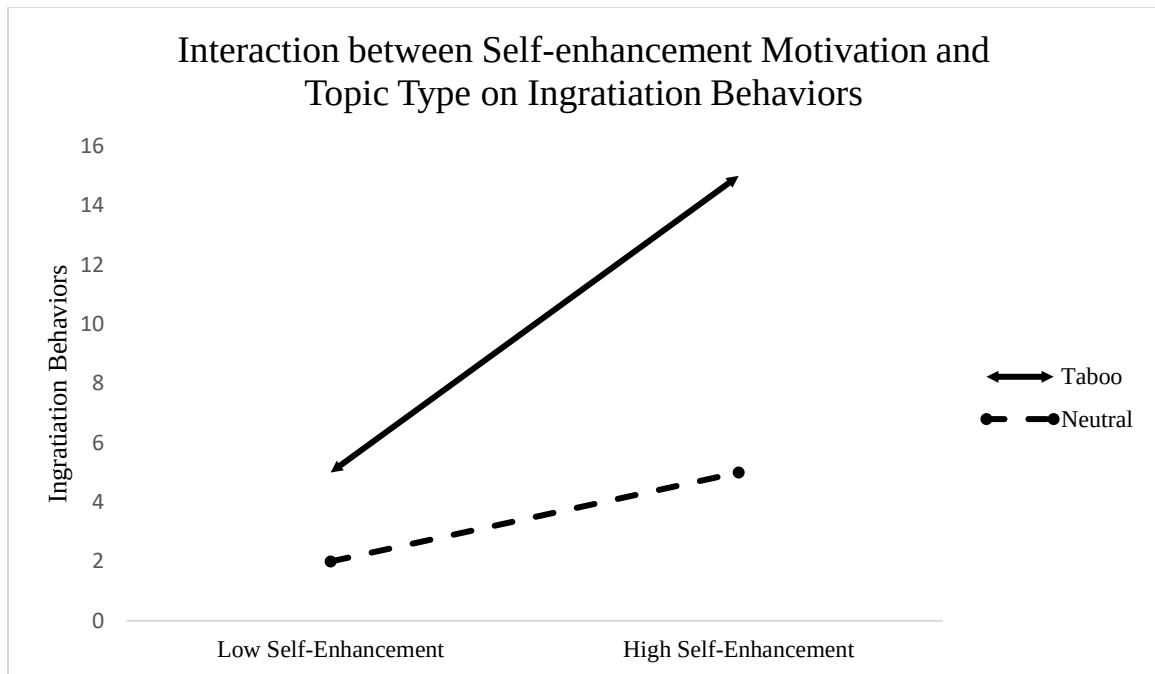


Figure 3. The expected interaction between the main effect of self-enhancement motivation and topic type on ingratiation behaviors.

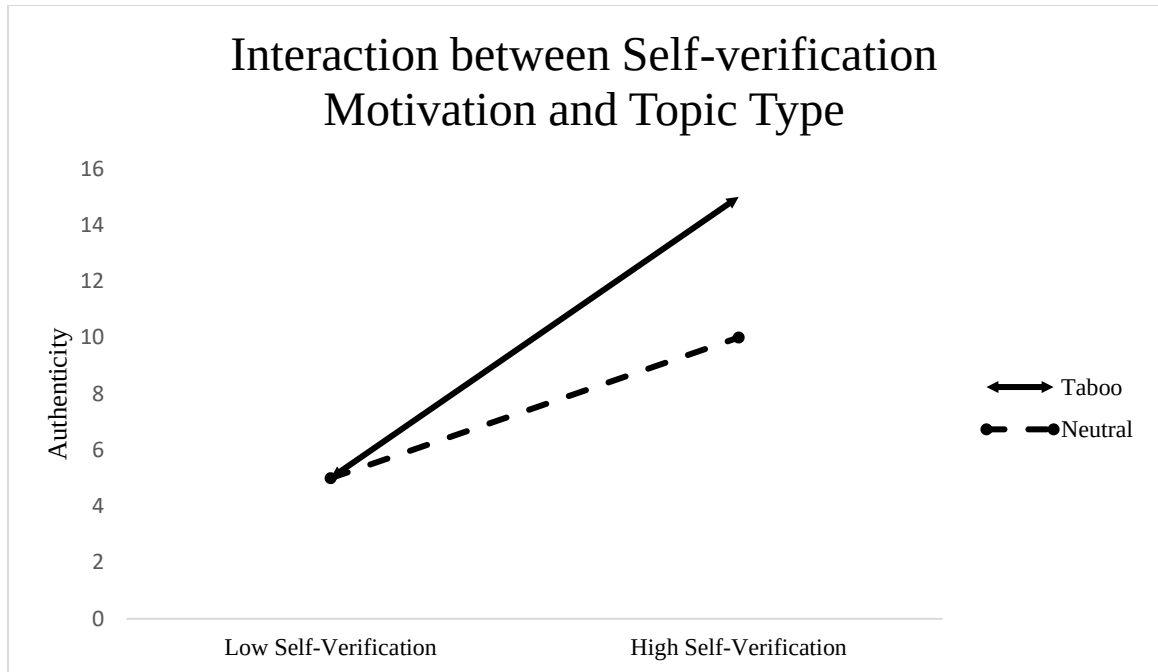


Figure 4. The expected interaction between the main effect of self-verification motivation and topic type on authenticity.

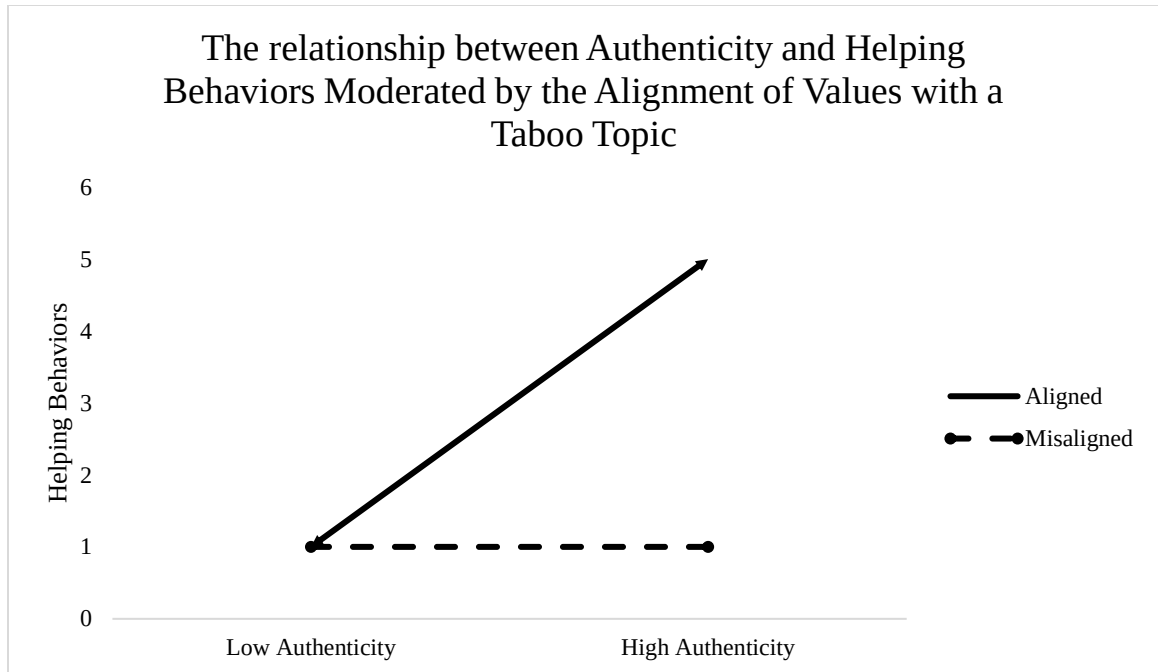


Figure 5. The expected relationship between authenticity and helping behaviors as moderated by the alignment of values during an interaction with a taboo topic.

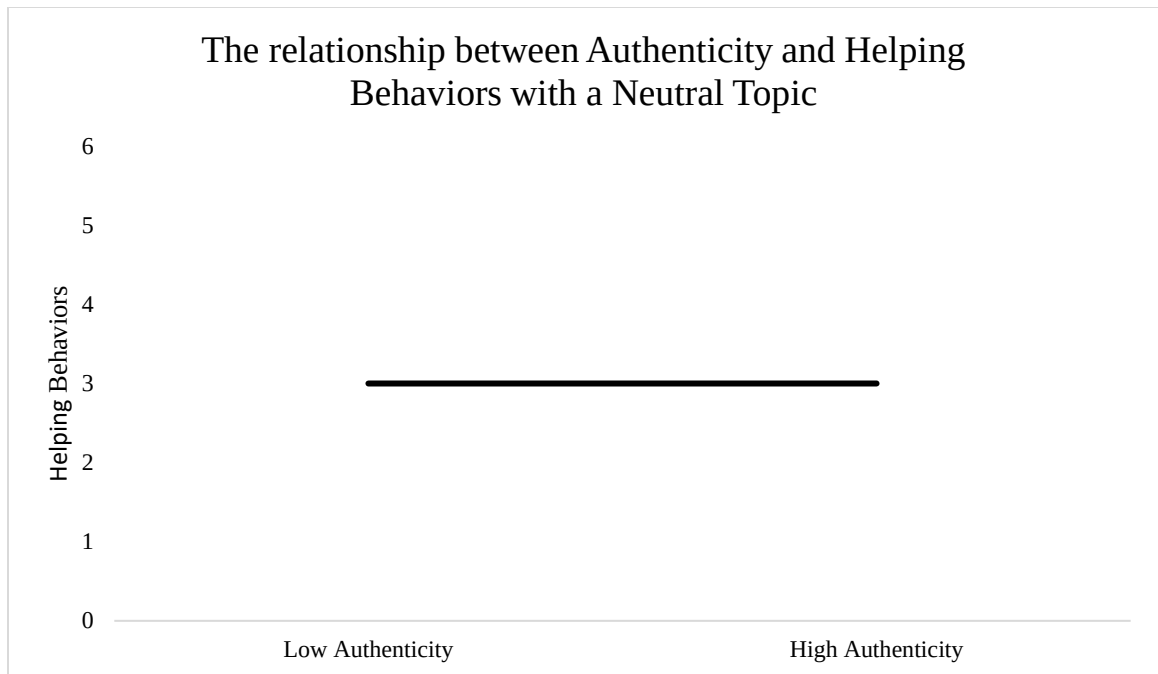


Figure 6. The expected relationship between authenticity and helping behaviors for a neutral topic.

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations for Pilot Test Ratings of Taboo Topics

Taboo	<i>N</i>	Agreement <i>M (SD)</i>	Care <i>M (SD)</i>	Appropriate <i>M (SD)</i>
Abortion Prochoice	10	4.00 (.82)	3.40 (1.08)	2.20 (.79)
Abortion Prolife	10	3.40 (1.51)	3.30 (1.25)	2.40 (1.27)
Gun Control Conservative	8	3.13 (1.25)	3.38 (.92)	2.38 (1.19)
Gun Control Liberal	15	2.80 (.68)	2.40 (.51)	2.47 (.64)
Immigration Conservative	15	3.33 (1.05)	2.93 (.89)	2.73 (1.39)
Immigration Liberal	11	3.64 (1.03)	3.27 (.79)	3.18 (.87)
Same-sex Conservative	11	2.55 (1.64)	3.45 (1.13)	1.82 (1.17)
Same-sex Liberal	8	4.50 (.76)	3.75 (1.17)	2.88 (1.25)
Neutral Fitness	7	4.14 (.69)	3.14 (.90)	4.29 (.49)
Neutral Pets	9	4.00 (1.12)	3.33 (.71)	3.67 (.71)
Total	104	3.46 (1.20)	3.17 (.97)	2.73 (1.18)

Table 2: Means, Standard Deviations, Alpha Coefficients, and Bivariate Correlations of Measures

	M(SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1 Self-Enhancement	4.09(1.21)	(.82)																	
2 Self-Verification	5.97(0.97)	-.24**	(.91)																
3 State Ingratiation	1.94(.94)	.52**	-.21**	(.95)															
4 State Auth. IAM Work	3.92(.80)	-.54**	.53**	-.47**	(.79)														
5 State Auth. RSOS	4.53(1.49)	-.28**	.38**	-.16**	.39**	-													
6 Helping	0.07(.26)	.06	.20**	.14*	.06	.02	-												
7 Trait Ingratiation	2.70(.72)	.52**	-.10	.59**	-.35**	-.14*	.11	(.94)											
8 Trait Authenticity	3.74(.69)	-.45**	.43**	-.40**	.57**	.36**	.10	-.46**	(.88)										
9 Altruism	3.22(.90)	.06	.09	.23**	.03	.06	.24**	.28**	.01	(.91)									
10 Agreeableness	7.27(1.28)	.15*	.35**	.05	.23**	.16*	.17**	.13*	.32**	.30**	(.96)								
11 Self-Monitoring	7.61(4.13)	.20**	-.09	.11	-.16**	-.09	-.01	.24**	-.19**	.09	-.15*	(.79)							
12 Value Alignment	3.18(1.55)	.13*	-.12*	.28**	-.19**	-.14*	-.02	.13*	-.24**	.04	-.06	.14*	-						
13 Affect Towards Coworker	4.02(.89)	.18**	.17**	.20**	.10	.08	.23**	.13*	.06	.19**	.35**	-.13*	.33**	(.92)					
14 Reactions to Activity	2.97(.72)	.25**	.06	.31**	-.13*	.03	.22**	.37**	-.12*	.23**	.18**	-.06	.09	.33**	(.85)				
15 Activity Difficulty	2.72(1.24)	.15*	.02	.27**	-.19**	-.15*	.06	.29**	-.10	.13*	.11	-.06	.02	.12*	.22**	-			
16 Activity Time Expectations	3.21(1.34)	.09	-.02	.12	-.07	-.07	.01	.13*	-.15*	.00	.00	-.05	.08	.01	-.14*	.34**	-		
17 Reactions to Interaction	4.00(.81)	.17**	.19**	.19**	.07	.12*	.22**	.11	.06	.17**	.28**	-.08	.31**	.78**	.31**	.09	-.02	(.86)	
18 Completed Cyberball	.59(.49)	-.03	-.01	-.10	.09	.09	.01	-.07	.06	-.07	-.11	.05	-.00	-.01	-.15*	.10	.04	-.04	-
19 *Throws to Coworker	2.64(1.34)	.08	-.07	-.04	.03	-.01	-.01	-.06	-.02	-.12	.03	.07	-.02	-.02	-.15	.05	.08	-.10	c

*Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$. ^aThis variable used a subset of the sample with $N=157$. ^cCannot be calculated because participants had to complete Cyberball in order to have a score to throw to coworkers. Alpha coefficients are on the diagonal. Agreeableness is on a 9-point scale from 1- Inaccurate to 9- Extremely Accurate. Self-Enhancement, Self-Verification, IAM Work (state), IAM Work (trait), are on a 7-point scale from 1- Strongly Agree to 7- Strongly Disagree. MIBOS (state), MIBOS (trait), Altruism, Reactions to Activity, Activity Difficulty, and Activity Time Expectations are on a 5-point scale from 1- Strongly Agree to 5- Strongly Disagree. The Real Self Overlap Scale is on a scale from 1 (greatest difference) to 6 (greatest overlap). Helping is a dichotomous variable with 0= did not help and 1= helped. The Self-Monitoring Scale is calculated with possible scores from 0-18. Reactions to Interaction and Affect towards Coworker are on a 5-point scale from 1-the most disagreeable (e.g. very unpleasant or very unlikely) to 5- the most agreeable (e.g. very pleasant or very likely). Affect also includes a 0 that indicates the coworker did not express an opinion. Completed Cyberball is a dichotomous variable with 0= did not complete and 1=completed. Throws to coworker indicates the number of throws out of a possible 7 opportunities (0-7 scale).*

Table 3: Means and Standard Deviations by Manipulated Motivation and Topic for Ingratiation and Authenticity

			MIBOS	IAM Work	Real Self Overlap
		N	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>
Self- Enhancement	Abortion Pro-choice	21	2.02(.83)	3.87(.79)	4.14 (1.35)
	Abortion Pro-Life	23	1.91(.94)	3.95(.82)	4.52(1.47)
	Same-Sex Marriage Liberal	25	1.81(.85)	4.01(.68)	4.00(1.83)
	Same-Sex Marriage Conservative	28	2.01(1.14)	3.72(.77)	4.62(1.34)
	Neutral Fitness	40	1.93(.84)	3.87(.76)	4.28(1.47)
	Total	137	1.95(.92)	3.88(.76)	4.32(1.50)
Self- Verification	Abortion Pro-choice	24	1.73(.69)	3.73(1.01)	4.63(1.50)
	Abortion Pro-Life	22	1.84(.86)	4.05(.56)	4.05(1.65)
	Same-Sex Marriage Liberal	27	2.17(.99)	3.88(.85)	4.78(1.42)
	Same-Sex Marriage Conservative	25	1.76(1.07)	4.09(.89)	5.04(1.46)
	Neutral Fitness	33	2.01(1.08)	4.07(.82)	5.03(1.19)
	Total	131	1.93(.97)	3.97(.84)	4.74(1.45)
Total		268	1.94(.94)	3.92(.80)	4.53(1.49)

Table 4: Hierarchical Linear Regression for the Prediction of Ingratiation Behaviors by Self-Enhancement Motivation

Variable	Ingratiation					
	b	<i>Step 1</i> SE	β	b	<i>Step 2</i> SE	β
Trait Ingratiation	.74	.07	.57**	.52	.08	.40**
Altruism	.08	.05	.08	.11	.05	.11*
Self- Enhancement				.24	.04	.31**
R^2		.35			.42	
Adjusted R^2		.34			.41	
ΔR^2			.35**			.07**

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 5: Hierarchical Linear Regression for the Prediction of Authenticity using the IAM Work and the Real-Self Overlap Scale by Self-Verification Motivation

Variable	Authenticity											
	IAM Work						Real-Self Overlap					
	Step 1			Step 2			Step 1			Step 2		
	b	SE	β	b	SE	β	b	SE	β	b	SE	β
Trait IAM Work	.63	.06	.54**	.47	.06	.41**	.75	.14	.34**	.51	.14	.24**
Agreeableness	.04	.03	.06	-.02	.03	-.03	.04	.07	.03	-.05	.07	-.04
Self- Monitoring	-.01	.01	-.05	-.01	.01	-.06	-.01	.02	-.02	-.01	.02	-.02
Self-Verification				.30	.04	.37**				.46	.10	.30**
R^2		.33			.44			.13			.20	
Adjusted R^2		.32			.43			.12			.18	
ΔR^2			.33**			.10**			.13**			.07**

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 6: Hierarchical Linear Regression for the Prediction of Ingratiation Behaviors by the Interaction between Self-Enhancement Motivation and Topic Type (Taboo vs. Neutral)

Variable	Step 1			Ingratiation Step 2			Step 3		
	b	SE	β	b	SE	β	b	SE	β
Trait Ingratiation	.74	.07	.57**	.52	.08	.40**	.52	.08	.40**
Altruism	.08	.05	.08	.11	.05	.11*	.11	.05	.11*
Self-Enhancement				.24	.04	.31**	.25	.08	.32*
Taboo				-.17	.10	-.78	-.15	.36	-.07
Self-Enhancement x Taboo							-.01	.09	-.01
R^2		.35			.42			.42	
Adjusted R^2		.34			.41			.41	
ΔR^2			.35**			.07**			.00

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 7: Hierarchical Linear Regression for the Prediction of Authenticity using the IAM Work by Self-Verification Motivation

Variable	Authenticity (measured by IAM Work)								
	<i>Step 1</i>			<i>Step 2</i>			<i>Step 3</i>		
	b	SE	β	b	SE	β	b	SE	β
Trait Authenticity	.63	.06	.54**	.47	.06	.41**	.47	.06	.41**
Agreeableness	.04	.03	.06	-.02	.03	-.03	-.03	.03	-.04
Self-Monitoring	-.01	.01	-.05	-.01	.01	-.05	-.01	.01	-.06
Self-Verification				.30	.04	.37**	.10	.12	.12*
Taboo				.08	.08	.043	-.91	.53	-.52
Self-Verification x Taboo							.17	.09	.61
R^2		.33			.44			.44	
Adjusted R^2		.32			.42			.43	
ΔR^2			.33**			.11**			.01

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 8: Hierarchical Linear Regression for the Prediction of Authenticity using the IAM Work by Self-Verification Motivation

Variable	Authenticity (measured by RSOS)								
	<i>Step 1</i>			<i>Step 2</i>			<i>Step 3</i>		
	b	SE	β	b	SE	β	b	SE	β
Trait Authenticity	.75	.14	.34**	.51	.14	.23**	.51	.14	.23**
Agreeableness	.04	.07	.03	-.05	.07	-.04	-.04	.07	-.03
Self-Monitoring	-.01	.02	-.02	-.01	.02	-.02	-.01	.02	-.02
Self-Verification				.46	.10	.30**	.70	.27	.46**
Taboo				.16	.19	.05	1.29	1.20	.39
Self-Verification x Taboo							-.19	.20	-.37
R^2		.13			.20			.20	
Adjusted R^2		.12			.18			.18	
ΔR^2			.13**			.07**			.00

Table 9: Logistic Regression for the Prediction of Helping by Ingratiation Behaviors

Variable	Helping											
	Step 1						Step 2					
	b	SE	Wald	95% CI for Odds Ratio Lower	Odds Ratio	Upper	b	SE	Wald	95% CI for Odds Ratio Lower	Odds Ratio	Upper
Constant	-6.45	.28	26.43**		.00		-6.32	1.26	25.03		.00	
Trait Ingratiation	.21	.34	.37	.63	1.23	2.40	-.04	.42	.01	.42	.96	2.18
Altruism	.95	.28	11.50**	1.49	2.58	4.46	.93	.28	10.85**	1.46	2.52	4.38
State Ingratiation							.30	.28	1.10	.77	1.35	2.34
-2 Log Likelihood			126.832						125.74			
Cox & Snell R^2			.06						.06			
Nagelkerke R^2					.14						.15	
χ^2					15.45**						16.54**	

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 10: Logistic Regression Predicting Helping by State Authenticity (IAM Work Scale), Value Alignment, Topic Type, and the Interaction of the Three

Variable	Helping											
	Step 1						Step 2					
	b	SE	Wald	95% CI for Odds Ratio			b	SE	Wald	95% CI for Odds Ratio		
				Lower	Odds Ratio	Upper				Lower	Odds Ratio	Upper
Constant	-8.23	2.46	11.18**				-9.49	2.79	11.56**			
Trait Authenticity	.17	.41	.17	.53	1.19	2.66	.27	.49	.29	.50	1.31	3.43
Agreeableness	.64	.27	5.46*	1.11	1.89	3.23	.65	.27	5.72*	1.13	1.92	3.28
Self-Monitoring	.02	.06	.10	.91	1.02	1.15	.02	.06	.09	.91	1.02	1.15
State Authenticity							-.10	.38	.07	.43	.90	1.90
Taboo									.81	.51	2.59	.84
Value Alignment									.03	.15	.03	.76
State Authenticity x Taboo x Value Alignment												
-2 Log Likelihood		127.793						125.24				
Cox & Snell R^2		.03						.04				
Negelkerke R^2		.08						.10				
χ^2					8.65*						11.21	

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 10 (cont'd)

Variable	Helping					
	Step 3					
	b	SE	Wald	95% CI for Odds Ratio		
				Lower	Odds Ratio	Upper
Constant	-8.78	3.58	6.02			
Trait Authenticity	.27	.49	.30	.50	1.31	3.40
Agreeableness	.65	.27	5.68*	1.12	1.92	3.28
Self-Monitoring	.02	.06	.09	.91	1.02	1.15
State Authenticity	1.29	.46	.17	.34	.83	2.05
Taboo	.57	.94	.37	.28	1.76	11.06
Value Alignment	-.08	.37	.05	.45	.92	1.90
State Authenticity x Taboo x Value Alignment	.02	.06	.10	.91	1.02	1.14
-2 Log Likelihood		125.137				
Cox & Snell R^2		.04				
Nagelkerke R^2		.10				
χ^2					11.31	

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 11: Hierarchical Logistic Regression Predicting Helping by State Authenticity (RSOS), Value Alignment, Topic Type, and the Interaction of the Three

Variable	Helping											
	Step 1						Step 2					
	b	SE	Wald	95% CI for Odds Ratio			b	SE	Wald	95% CI for Odds Ratio		
				Lower	Odds Ratio	Upper				Lower	Odds Ratio	Upper
Constant	-8.23	2.46	11.18**				-9.52	2.76	11.94**			
Trait Authenticity	.17	.41	.17	.53	1.19	2.66	.23	.43	.28	.54	1.26	2.92
Agreeableness	.64	.27	5.46*	1.11	1.89	3.23	.66	.28	5.70*	1.13	1.93	3.31
Self-Monitoring	.02	.06	.10	.91	1.02	1.15	.02	.06	.10	.91	1.02	1.15
State Authenticity							-.05	.17	.11	.68	.95	1.31
Taboo							.80	.50	2.57	.51	2.59	.84
Value Alignment							.03	.15	.04	.15	.03	.76
State Authenticity x Taboo x Value Alignment												
-2 Log Likelihood		127.793						125.21				
Cox & Snell R^2		.03						.04				
Nagelkerke R^2		.08						.10				
χ^2					8.65*						11.24	

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 11 (cont'd)

Variable	Helping					
	Step 3					
	b	SE	Wald	95% CI for Odds Ratio		
				Lower	Odds Ratio	Upper
Constant	-9.47	3.48	7.38			
Trait Authenticity	.23	.43	.28	.54	1.26	2.92
Agreeableness	.66	.28	5.65*	1.12	1.93	3.31
Self-Monitoring	.02	.06	.10	.91	1.02	1.15
State Authenticity	-.06	.25	.06	.58	.94	1.54
Taboo	.78	.88	.79	.39	2.19	12.20
Value Alignment	.02	.36	.00	.51	1.02	2.06
State Authenticity x Taboo x Value Alignment	.00	.05	.00	.91	.98	1.10
-2 Log Likelihood		125.21				
Cox & Snell R^2		.04				
Nagelkerke R^2		.10				
χ^2					11.24	

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 12: Frequencies, Means and Standard Deviations of the Qualitative Descriptors Professional and Authentic by Condition

		N	Frequency: Professional	Professional <i>M(SD)</i>	Frequency: Authentic	Authentic <i>M(SD)</i>
Self- Enhancement	Abortion Pro-choice	21	0	.00(.00)	1	.05(.22)
	Abortion Pro-Life	23	0	.00(.00)	0	.00(.00)
	Same-Sex Marriage Liberal	25	1	.04(.20)	0	.00(.00)
	Same-Sex Marriage Conservative	28	1	.04(.19)	3	.11(.32)
	Neutral Fitness	40	2	.05(.22)	2	.05(.22)
	Total	137	4	.03(.17)	6	.04(.21)
Self- Verification	Abortion Pro-choice	24	0	.00(.00)	4	.17(.38)
	Abortion Pro-Life	22	0	.00(.00)	2	.09(.29)
	Same-Sex Marriage Liberal	27	1	.04(.19)	3	.11(.32)
	Same-Sex Marriage Conservative	25	0	.00(.00)	1	.04(.20)
	Neutral Fitness	33	1	.03(.17)	3	.09(.29)
	Total	131	2	.02(.12)	13	.10(.30)
Total		268	6	.02(.15)	19	.07(.26)

Note: Coding was on a dichotomous scale with 1= occurred, 0= did not occur.

Table 13: Means and Standard Deviations of the Coding for Qualitative Responses to Taboo by Condition

		N	Addressed Taboo <i>M(SD)</i>	Brought Up Similar Topics <i>M(SD)</i>	Talked About Opinions in General <i>M(SD)</i>	Reacted <i>M(SD)</i>
Self- Enhancement	Abortion Pro-choice	21	.05(.22)	.10(.30)	.10(.30)	.24(.44)
	Abortion Pro-Life	23	.09(.29)	.22(.42)	.04(.21)	.26(.45)
	Same-Sex Marriage Liberal	25	.00(.00)	.00(.00)	.04(.20)	.04(.20)
	Same-Sex Marriage Conservative	28	.18(.39)	.21(.42)	.11(.31)	.39(.50)
	Neutral Fitness	40	.08(.27)	.03(.16)	.03(.16)	.13(.33)
	Total	137	.08(.27)	.10(.30)	.06(.24)	.20(.40)
Self- Verification	Abortion Pro-choice	24	.08(.25)	.08(.28)	.08(.28)	.25(.44)
	Abortion Pro-Life	22	.14(.35)	.18(.39)	.09(.29)	.32(.48)
	Same-Sex Marriage Liberal	27	.04(.19)	.07(.27)	.00(.00)	.11(.32)
	Same-Sex Marriage Conservative	25	.12(.33)	.12(.33)	.12(.33)	.36(.49)
	Neutral Fitness	33	.06(.24)	.00(.00)	.00(.00)	.06(.24)
	Total	131	.08(.28)	.08(.28)	.05(.23)	.21(.41)
Total		268	.08(.25)	.09(.29)	.06(.29)	.21(.40)

Note: Coding was on a dichotomous scale with 1= occurred, 0= did not occur.

Table 14: Means and Standard Deviations of the Coding for Qualitative Responses to Taboo by Value Alignment

Value Alignment		Addressed Taboo	Brought Up Similar Topics	Talked About Opinions in General	Reacted
	N	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>
No Opinions	21	.00(.00)	.05(.22)	.05(.22)	.10(.30)
Strongly Disagree	24	.29(.46)	.50(.51)	.17(.38)	.75(.44)
Disagree	36	.17(.38)	.03(.17)	.08(.28)	.25(.44)
Neutral	60	.03(.18)	.08(.28)	.05(.22)	.15(.36)
Agree	59	.05(.22)	.07(.25)	.00(.00)	.12(.33)
Strongly Agree	68	.06(.24)	.03(.17)	.06(.24)	.15(.36)
Total	268	.08(.28)	.09(.29)	.06(.23)	.21(.40)

Note: Coding was on a dichotomous scale with 1= occurred, 0= did not occur.

Table 15: Logistic Regression for the Prediction of Mentioning Similar Topics in Response to Taboo by Motivation, Taboo, and Value Alignment

Variable	Mentioning Similar Topics					
	<i>Step 1</i>					
	b	SE	Wald	95% CI for Odds Ratio		
				Lower	Odds Ratio	Upper
Constant	1.03	1.32	.61		.29	
Motivation	.25	.44	.33	.54	1.29	3.50
Taboo	-2.27	1.04	4.81*	.01	.10	.79
Value Alignment	-.41	.14	8.83**	.51	.67	.87
-2 Log Likelihood		146.36				
Cox & Snell R^2		.07				
Nagelkerke R^2		.15				
χ^2					19.84**	
Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$						

Table 16: Logistic Regression for the Prediction of Mentioning Opinions in Response to Taboo by Self-Enhancement and Self-Verification Motivations

Variable	Mentioning Similar Topics					
	Step 1					
	b	SE	Wald	95% CI for Odds Ratio		
				Lower	Odds Ratio	Upper
Constant	-8.61	3.20	7.24		.00	
Self-Enhancement	-.09	.21	.019	.60	.91	1.39
Self-Verification	.98	.45	4.71*	1.10	2.66	6.43
-2 Log Likelihood		108.03				
Cox & Snell R^2		.03				
Nagelkerke R^2		.08				
χ^2					7.49*	
Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$						

Table 17: Participation rates of Cyberball by Motivation and Taboo Conditions

Motivation	Taboo	N	<i>M(SD)</i>
Self-Enhancement	Abortion Pro-choice	21	.52(.51)
	Abortion Pro-Life	23	.52(.51)
	Same-Sex Marriage Liberal	25	.72(.45)
	Same-Sex Marriage Conservative	28	.61(.50)
	Neutral Fitness	40	.70(.46)
	Total	137	.63(.49)
Self-Verification	Abortion Pro-choice	24	.50(.51)
	Abortion Pro-Life	22	.40(.50)
	Same-Sex Marriage Liberal	27	.59(.50)
	Same-Sex Marriage Conservative	25	.56(.50)
	Neutral Fitness	33	.63(.49)
	Total	131	.54(.50)
Total	Abortion Pro-choice	45	.51(.51)
	Abortion Pro-Life	45	.47(.50)
	Same-Sex Marriage Liberal	52	.65(.48)
	Same-Sex Marriage Conservative	53	.58(.50)
	Neutral Fitness	73	.67(.47)
	Total	268	.59(.49)

Note: Participation scores were on a dichotomous scale with 1 = participated, 0 = did not participate.

Table 18: Logistic Regression for the Prediction of Cyberball Completion by Taboo

Variable	Completed Cyberball					
	<i>Step 1</i>					
	b	SE	Wald	95% CI for Odds Ratio		
				Lower	Odds Ratio	Upper
Taboo	.18	.09	4.10*	1.00	1.19	1.42
Motivation	.30	.25	1.44	.83	1.35	2.21
Constant	-.66	.48	1.91		.80	
-2 Log Likelihood	357.05					
Cox & Snell R^2		.02				
Nagelkerke R^2		.03				
χ^2					5.83	

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 19: Means and Standard Deviations of Throws to Coworker by Motivation and Taboo Conditions

Motivation	Taboo	N	<i>M(SD)</i>
Self-Enhancement	Abortion Pro-choice	11	2.36(.67)
	Abortion Pro-Life	12	2.50(1.62)
	Same-Sex Marriage Liberal	18	2.89(1.32)
	Same-Sex Marriage Conservative	17	2.41(1.12)
	Neutral Fitness	28	3.00(1.33)
	Total	86	2.71(1.27)
Self-Verification	Abortion Pro-choice	12	2.08 (1.00)
	Abortion Pro-Life	9	3.11 (1.62)
	Same-Sex Marriage Liberal	16	2.06 (1.12)
	Same-Sex Marriage Conservative	14	3.00 (1.47)
	Neutral Fitness	21	2.67(1.59)
	Total	72	2.56(1.41)
Total	Abortion Pro-choice	23	2.22(.85)
	Abortion Pro-Life	21	2.76(1.61)
	Same-Sex Marriage Liberal	34	2.50(1.29)
	Same-Sex Marriage Conservative	31	2.68(1.30)
	Neutral Fitness	49	2.86(1.44)
	Total	158	2.64(1.34)

Note: Throws to Coworker were on a Scale of 0-7.

Table 20: Hierarchical Linear Regression for the Prediction of Ball Tosses by the Interaction between Self-Enhancement Motivation and Topic Type (Taboo vs. Neutral)

Variable	Ball Tosses								
	Step 1			Step 2			Step 3		
	b	SE	β	b	SE	β	b	SE	β
Constant	3.28**	.48		2.74**	.56		2.14**	.60	
Trait Ingratiation	-.04	.15	-.03	-.18	.17	-.10	-.16	.17	-.09
Altruism	-.17	.12	-.11	-.13	.12	-.09	-.14	.12	-1.17
Self-Enhancement				.17	.11	.14	.31	.12	.26*
Taboo				.30	.23	.11	2.27	.85	.79**
Self- Enhancement x Taboo							-.49	.20	-.72*
R^2		.02			.04			.07	
Adjusted R^2		.00			.01			.04	
ΔR^2			.02			.02			.04*

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

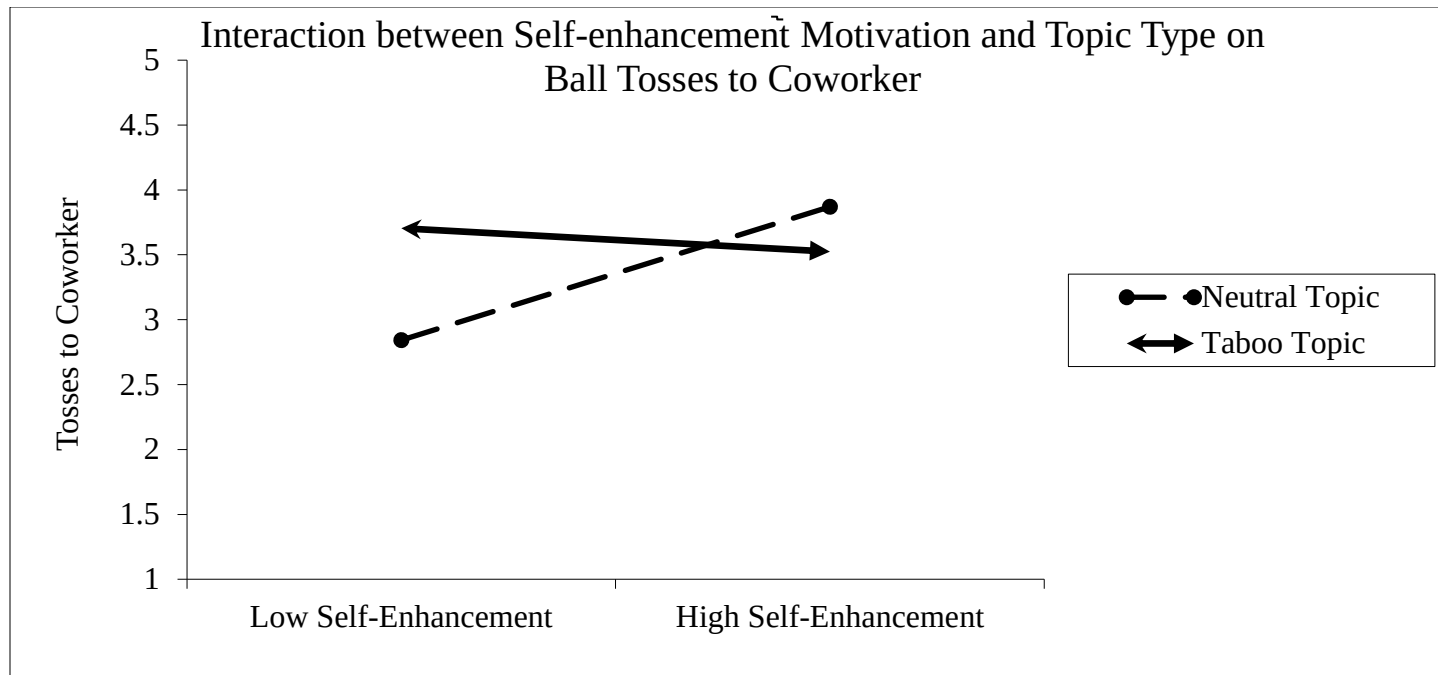


Figure 7. The Interaction Between Self-Enhancement Motivation and Topic Type on Ball Tosses to Coworker

Table 21: Means and Standard Deviations of Affective Responses by Condition

Motivation	Taboo	N	M(SD)
Self-Enhancement	Abortion Pro-choice	21	4.21(.49)
	Abortion Pro-Life	23	3.68(1.18)
	Same-Sex Marriage Liberal	25	4.16(.60)
	Same-Sex Marriage Conservative	28	3.57(1.09)
	Neutral Fitness	40	4.05(.76)
	Total	137	3.93(.89)
Self-Verification	Abortion Pro-choice	24	4.40(.68)
	Abortion Pro-Life	22	4.06(.72)
	Same-Sex Marriage Liberal	27	4.16(.80)
	Same-Sex Marriage Conservative	25	3.41(1.27)
	Neutral Fitness	33	4.38(.58)
	Total	131	4.10(.90)
Total	Abortion Pro-choice	45	4.31(.60)
	Abortion Pro-Life	45	3.87(.99)
	Same-Sex Marriage Liberal	52	4.16(.71)
	Same-Sex Marriage Conservative	53	3.50(1.17)
	Neutral Fitness	73	4.20(.70)
	Total	268	4.01(.89)

Note: Affect towards Coworker are on a 5-point scale from 1-the most disagreeable (e.g. very unpleasant or very unlikely) to 5- the most agreeable (e.g. very pleasant or very likely). Affect also includes a 0 that indicates the coworker did not express an opinion.

Table 22: Means and Standard Deviations of Affective Responses by Levels of Value Alignment

Value Alignment	N	Affect <i>M(SD)</i>
No Opinions	21	4.51(.60)
Strongly Disagree	24	2.60(1.26)
Disagree	36	3.76(.90)
Neutral	60	3.84(.68)
Agree	59	4.20(.65)
Strongly Agree	68	4.50(.47)
Total	268	4.02(.89)

Note: Affect towards Coworker are on a 5-point scale from 1-the most disagreeable (e.g. very unpleasant or very unlikely) to 5- the most agreeable (e.g. very pleasant or very likely). Affect also includes a 0 that indicates the coworker did not express an opinion.

Table 23: Logistic Regression for the Prediction of Helping by Affect

Variable	Helping					
	<i>Step 1</i>					
	b	SE	Wald	95% CI for Odds Ratio		
				Lower	Odds Ratio	Upper
Constant	-13.54	3.16	18.35			
Affective Ratings	2.46	.67	13.61**	3.17	11.74	43.44
-2 Log Likelihood		117.237				
Cox & Snell R^2		.09				
Nagelkerke R^2		.22				
χ^2					25.04**	
Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$						

APPENDIX B: Mturk Details

Table 24: Mturk Reporting Checklist according to the recommendations of Keith, Tay, & Harms (2017)

Reporting Checklist		
Worker Characteristics	Sample Size	281
	Average Age	35.79 (SD = 10.15)
	Gender	54.8% male
	Percentage from U.S.	All participants were located in the U.S.
	Racial/Ethnic Makeup	76.9% White 9.3% Black/African American 4.6% multi-racial 4.3% Asian/Asian American 3.6% Hispanic .7% Native American .4% Latina/o/x .4% Not listed
	First Language	Native English speaker was required
	Employment Status	All employed; 81.9% Full time 69% Works with others majority of the time, 18.9% about half the time, 6.8% less than half the time, 5.3% not at all
Qualifications	Nature of Qualifications	- HIT Approval Rate (%) for all Requesters' HITs greater than or equal to 95 - Number of HITs Approved greater than or equal to 100 - Location is US
Prescreens	Nature of prescreen	- Be an American citizen or have the legal right to work in the United States (e.g. a green card holder) - Be a native English speaker (i.e. English as a first language, learned English as a young child) - Be currently employed
	Implementation of prescreen	Listed on the HIT description Screening on survey and incorrect answers exited the survey
	Percent excluded based on prescreen	8.1% (25 of 306)

Table 24 (cont'd)

	Number agreeing to participate in main study	91.83%
Self-selection	Completion rate	100% (If participants did not complete the task, it was returned, and their data was not stored. I would estimate the completion rate is closer to 64% given information from Qualtrics)
Compensation	Base payment	\$4.00
	Bonuses	0 (some participants were paid \$1.50 and then given a \$2.50 bonus for a total of \$4.00)
	Average task time	1 hour, 28 minutes and 30 seconds
Research Design	Nature of Research design	2x2x2 fully crossed experimental design
	Materials used	Listed in Appendices
	Manipulations	Listed above (Company culture, Taboo)
	Number of participants in each condition	Approximately 26 per condition
Attention Checks	Nature of attention checks	“Please choose strongly agree for quality control” “Please choose 9 to indicate you are not an alien”
	Number of participants removed from analysis	13 participants removed

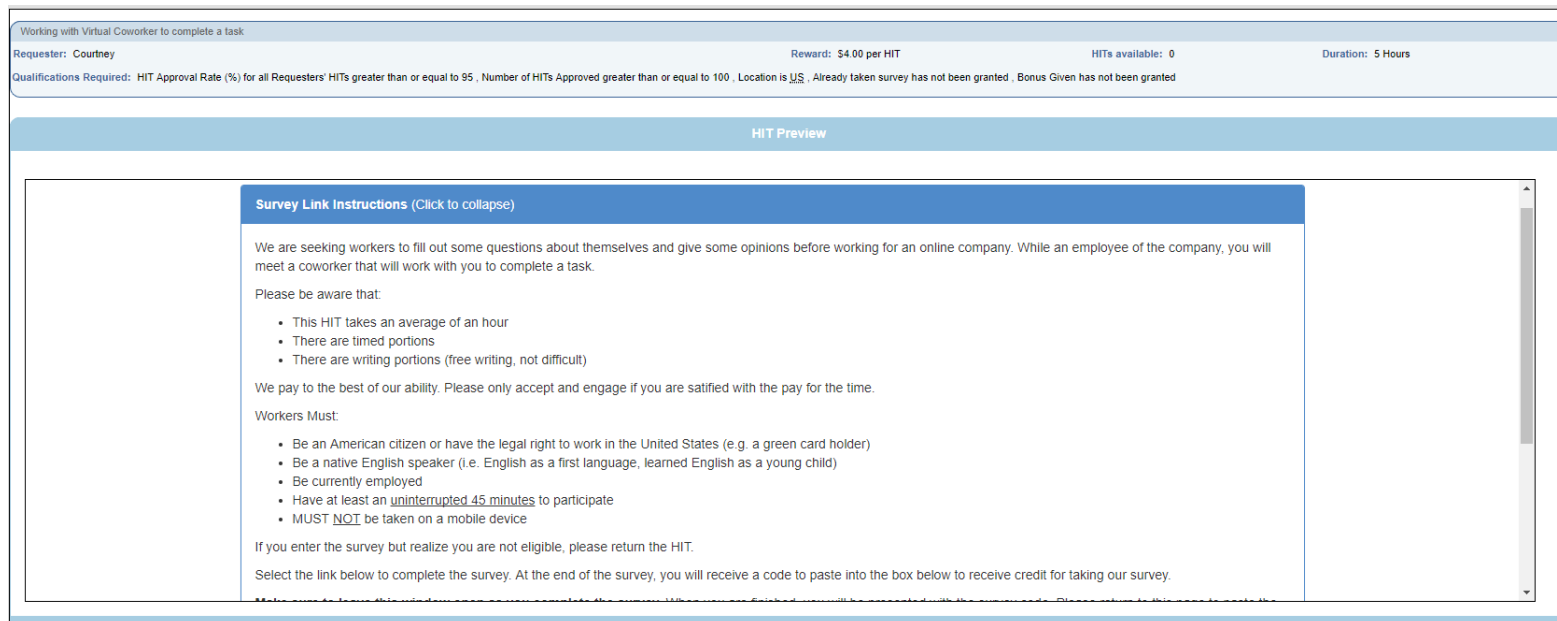


Figure 8. Part 1 of the complete Human Intelligence Task (HIT) posted on Mturk.

On the Preview screen, participants could see the following information:

Title:

Working with Virtual Coworker to complete a task

Description:

You will first provide information about yourself and your opinions. Then, you and a partner will work to complete a task before evaluating your experience.

Key words:

opinions, advertising task

Working with Virtual Coworker to complete a task

Requester: Courtney

Reward: \$4.00 per HIT

HITs available: 0

Duration: 5 Hours

Qualifications Required: HIT Approval Rate (%) for all Requesters' HITs greater than or equal to 95 , Number of HITs Approved greater than or equal to 100 , Location is US , Already taken survey has not been granted , Bonus Given has not been granted

HIT Preview

- Be an American citizen or have the legal right to work in the United States (e.g. a green card holder)
- Be a native English speaker (i.e. English as a first language, learned English as a young child)
- Be currently employed
- Have at least an uninterrupted 45 minutes to participate
- MUST NOT be taken on a mobile device

If you enter the survey but realize you are not eligible, please return the HIT.

Select the link below to complete the survey. At the end of the survey, you will receive a code to paste into the box below to receive credit for taking our survey.

Make sure to leave this window open as you complete the survey. When you are finished, you will be presented with the survey code. Please return to this page to paste the code into the box.

Survey link: https://msu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3lz23BlmSjoPCoR

Provide the survey code here:

Submit

Figure 9. Part 2 of the complete Human Intelligence Task (HIT) posted on Mturk.

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APPENDIX C: Informed Consent and Debrief

Informed Consent

Informed Consent Behavior in Online Partnerships

This research aims to understand how people get to know each other and their subsequent work quality. In this activity, you will first answer some simple questions about yourself. You will then be matched with a company and partnered with a virtual coworker. You will interact with your partner before completing your work assignments. Lastly, you will answer questions about your experience.

DO NOT take this survey on your mobile device.

You will receive \$4.00 for your participation at the end of the study if you qualify for participation. You must have at least an uninterrupted 45 minutes to take the survey.

To participate in this study, you must be over the age of 18 and speak English fluently. Your participation is voluntary and greatly appreciated. You may choose not to participate at all, or you may refuse to participate in certain procedures or answer certain questions, or discontinue your participation at any time without consequences (e.g., will not affect treatment you will receive). Also, you have the right to request that your responses not be used in the data analyses.

Participation in this research study does not involve any foreseeable risks. The benefit of participating in this research study, however, is that you have the opportunity to learn more about the research process and also help contribute to scientific advancement.

This study is confidential and your consent form will be stored in a separate place from your responses. To help us protect your confidentiality, **please do not write or give your name or any other identifying information during the study.** It is important to be honest while interacting with your virtual coworker but please do not share too much information. Your confidentiality will be protected to the maximum extent allowed by law. All data will be stored on the hard drive of a secure computer, and will only be accessed by trained experimenters. Data will be stored for five years after the publication of research stemming from this project---as specified by the American Psychological Association.

Your experience will not be the same as others because we would like to see how individuals behave in different environments. The goal of the study is to observe behavior so elements of the content may be fabricated. At the conclusion of this research, you will be provided with an explanation of the overall purpose of the survey. It is our goal that you learn about the research you participated in today. Furthermore, the investigator will be happy to answer any questions you have about the research.

Courtney Bryant, a graduate student in the Department of Psychology at Michigan State, is conducting this scientific study under the advisement of Dr. Ann Marie Ryan, a professor in the Department of Psychology. If you have questions about the study, contact Ann Marie Ryan,

Ph.D., Department of Psychology, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824, phone: 517-353-8855, e-mail: ryan@msu.edu. If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, Fax 517-432-4503, or e-mail irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 4000 Collins Rd, Suite 136, Lansing, MI 48910.

Debriefing Form

Debriefing Form

Thank you for participating in this study. Below you will find more information about the purpose of this study as well as a list of counseling and informational resources.

The purpose of this study was to examine how taboo topics affect the behavior of coworkers. Specifically, we looked at how motivations impact behavior (authenticity and impression management), and how behaviors impact future helping. This research has important implications for informing organizational and individual policies regarding taboo in the workplace. Your responses in this study will help inform researchers of the psychological mechanisms that could potentially affect coworker relationships.

The partner that you worked with, the materials viewed, and the company you worked for were fictional, programmed specifically for this experiment.

If for any reason the study questions or participation made you feel in need of advice or counseling, please see the national resources listed below.

Listening Ear Crisis Intervention Center
1017 East Grand River
East Lansing, MI, 48823
24-Hour Crisis Hotline: 517-337-1717
Business Phone: 517-337-1728

We would like to thank you again for your participation. Participants who are interested in learning more about the results of this study may send the researchers a request for a summary of the findings via email at ryan@msu.edu. They may also send any comments, questions or concerns regarding the study to the principal investigator, Dr. Ann Marie Ryan at: Department of Psychology, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824, E-mail: ryan@msu.edu.

To complete this survey, please press next

APPENDIX D: Measures in Initial Survey

IAM Work- Individual Authenticity Measure at Work Scale

Trait Authenticity at Work

Instructions: For the following questions, please focus on your most recent work position when answering the items.

Imagine how much each statement applies to you *only at work* (and not in other situations) for the past 4 weeks.

Scale: 1 (“does not describe me at all”) to 7 (“describes me very well”).

1. I am true to myself at work in most situations
2. At work, I always stand by what I believe in
3. I behave in accordance with my values and beliefs in the workplace
4. I find it easier to get on with people in the workplace when I’m being myself
5. At work, I feel alienated
6. I don’t feel who I truly am at work
7. At work, I feel out of touch with the “real me”
8. In my working environment I feel “cut off” from who I really am
9. At work, I feel the need to do what others expect me to do
10. I am strongly influenced in the workplace by the opinions of others
11. Other people influence me greatly at work
12. At work, I behave in a manner that people expect me to behave

MIBOS- Measuring Ingratiation Behavior in an Organizational Setting

Trait Ingratiation

Instructions: Please indicate the extent to which you actually use the behaviors described by the items to influence your coworkers. Do not make a judgement about the desirability or undesirability of the behaviors. Instead, only report the frequency in which you show each of these behaviors when dealing with your coworkers.

Scale: 5-point Likert-type scale: never do it (1), seldom do it (2), occasionally do it (3), often do it (4), and almost always do it (5).

1. Impress upon your coworker(s) that only he/she can help you in a given situation mainly to make him/her feel good about himself/herself.
2. Show him/her that you share his/her enthusiasm about his/ her new idea even when you may not actually like it.
3. Try to let him/her know that you have a reputation for being liked.
4. Try to make sure that he/she is aware of your successes.
5. Highlight his/her achievements in a meeting not being attended by him/her.
6. Give frequent smiles to express enthusiasm/interest about something he/she is interested in even if you do not like it.
7. Express work attitudes that are similar to your coworker(s)’ as a way of letting him/her know that the two of you are alike.

8. Tell him/her that you can learn a lot from his/her experience.
9. Exaggerate his/her admirable qualities to convey the impression that you think highly of him/her.
10. Disagree on trivial or unimportant issues but agree on those issues in which he/she expects support from you.
11. Try to imitate such work behaviors of your coworker(s) as working late or occasionally working on weekends.
12. Look for opportunities to let your coworker(s) know your virtues/strengths.
13. Ask your coworker for advice in areas in which he/she thinks he/she is smart to let him/her feel that you admire his/her talent.
14. Try to do things for your coworker(s) that show your selfless generosity.
15. Look out for opportunities to admire your coworker(s).
16. Let your coworker(s) know the attitudes you share with him/her.
17. Compliment your coworker(s) on his/her achievement, however trivial it may actually be to you personally.
18. Laugh heartily at your coworker(s)' jokes even when they are not really funny.
19. Go out of your way to run an errand for your coworker(s).
20. Offer to help your coworker(s) by using your personal contacts.
21. Try to persuasively present your own qualities when attempting to convince your coworker(s) about your abilities.
22. Volunteer to be of help to your coworker(s) in matters like locating a good apartment, finding a good insurance agent, etc.
23. Spend time listening to your coworker(s)' personal problems even if you have no interest in them.
24. Volunteer to help your coworker(s) in his/her work even if it means extra work for you.

Self-Monitoring Scale

Instructions: The statements below concern your personal reactions to a number of different situations. No two statements are exactly alike, so consider each statement carefully before answering. If a statement is TRUE or MOSTLY TRUE as applied to you, select True. If a statement is FALSE or NOT USUALLY TRUE as applied to you, select False.

1. I find it hard to imitate the behavior of other people.
2. At parties and social gatherings, I do not attempt to do or say things that others will like.
3. I can only argue for ideas which I already believe.
4. I can make impromptu speeches even on topics about which I have almost no information.
5. I guess I put on a show to impress or entertain others.
6. I would probably make a good actor.
7. In a group of people I am rarely the center of attention.
8. In different situations and with different people, I often act like very different persons.
9. I am not particularly good at making other people like me.

Altruism

Instructions: Using the following scale, please select the category that conforms to the frequency with which you have carried out the following acts.

Scale: 1- Never, 2- Once, 3- More than Once, 4- Often, 5- Very Often

1. I have helped push a stranger's car that was broken down or out of gas.
2. I have given directions to a stranger.
3. I have made change for a stranger.
4. I have given money to a charity.
5. I have given money to a stranger who needed it (or asked me for it).
6. I have donated goods or clothes to a charity.
7. I have done volunteer work for a charity.
8. I have donated blood.
9. I have helped carry a stranger's belongings (books, parcels, etc.).
10. I have delayed an elevator and held the door open for a stranger.
11. I have allowed someone to go ahead of me in a lineup (in the supermarket, at a fast-food restaurant).
12. I have given a stranger a lift in my car.
13. I have pointed out a clerk's error (in a bank, at the supermarket) in undercharging me for an item.
14. I have let a neighbor whom I didn't know too well borrow an item of some value to me (e.g., a dish, tools, etc.).
15. I have bought 'charity' holiday cards or items deliberately because I knew it was a good cause.
16. I have helped a classmate who I did not know that well with an assignment when my knowledge was greater than his or hers.
17. I have, before being asked, voluntarily looked after a neighbor's pets or children without being paid for it.
18. I have offered to help a handicapped or elderly stranger across a street.
19. I have offered my seat on a bus or train to a stranger who was standing.
20. I have helped an acquaintance to move households.

APPENDIX E: Motivation Manipulations

Self-Enhancement Manipulation



WILSON PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

THANK YOU!

Thank you for becoming an employee at WPS! Please read the information here carefully. **Our culture is important to us.** We look forward to your contribution!

ABOUT US

WHO WE ARE
Wilson Professional Services was founded in 1990 as a firm to help small to mid-sized companies with all of their needs. WPS is a **very professional company** that likes to keep a **polished, friendly** environment. We want only the best for our clients!

WHAT WE DO
We provide financial, marketing, business strategy, and community relations services to our clients. In everything we do, we try to maintain a **positive image** so that our clients get a positive result.

ABOUT YOU AT WPS

YOUR ROLE
As an employee at WPS, please try to make a **good impression** so that your coworkers and clients will see you as favorable and socially attractive.

WHAT YOU WILL DO
You will first get to know your coworker. Then, you each will be assigned to the marketing team to provide services to our clients that are creating advertisements.

Here is a testimonial from a past employee of: Wilson Professional Services

"I really enjoyed working for WPS. Their culture of professionalism made the workplace a nice and pleasant environment to work. Clients really appreciated the positive image that all employees worked to put forth. It seemed to enhance the quality of their products"

Below is a welcome message directly from the CEO of: Wilson Professional Services

"Wilson Professional Services was created with the ideal image of service in mind. The typical employee is especially attentive to the business model, which is to deliver the greatest quality of work while maintaining a uniformly professional appearance. That includes making a good impression, no matter what it takes, both inside the company with employees and outside the company with clients. I am personally thrilled to have you aboard and look forward to your contribution to WPS."



WILSON PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

THANK YOU!

Thank you for becoming an employee at WPS! Please read the information here carefully. **Our culture is important to us.** We look forward to your contribution!

ABOUT US

WHO WE ARE

Wilson Professional Services was founded in 1990 as a firm to help small to mid-sized companies with all of their needs. WPS is a very **free-spirited** company that likes to keep an **open and friendly** environment. We want only the best for our clients!

WHAT WE DO

We provide financial, marketing, business strategy, and community relations services to our clients. In everything we do, we try to maintain an **authentic image** so that our clients get an authentic result.

ABOUT YOU AT WPS

YOUR ROLE

As an employee at WPS, please try to **act naturally, be honest, and be yourself** so that your coworkers and clients will see you for who you are.

WHAT YOU WILL DO

You will first get to know your coworker. Then, you each will be assigned to the marketing team to provide services to our clients that are creating advertisements.

Here is a testimonial from a past employee of: Wilson Professional Services

"I really enjoyed working for WPS. Their culture of authenticity made the workplace a nice and pleasant environment to work. Clients really appreciated the honesty that all employees worked to put forth. The personalization from each employee seems to enhance the quality of the products"

Below is a welcome message directly from the CEO of: Wilson Professional Services

"Wilson Professional Services was created with the image of personalized service in mind. The typical employee is especially attentive to their inner creativity, which helps deliver the greatest quality of work while maintaining a creative and authentic appearance. That includes being yourself, no matter the circumstances, both inside the company with employees and outside the company with clients. I am personally thrilled to have you aboard and look forward to your contribution to WPS."

Company Manipulation Check

The company culture at Wilson Professional Services was:

1. Professional: they wanted you to maintain a positive image
2. Authentic: they wanted you to be yourself
3. Military: they wanted you to be a soldier
4. None of the above

APPENDIX F: Taboo Manipulations

Prompts and Responses of Virtual Partner

1. Please introduce yourself by telling your coworker about yourself.

For example, your personality type, your hobbies, what you like to do in your spare time, etc.

“Hi! Nice to meet you. Well, I’m pretty extroverted and I like to think I’m an optimistic person. I like to listen to music and go to shows. Live concerts are my favorite. I spend my spare time mostly with my best friend laughing all day or playing with my dog.”

2. Please tell your coworker about your working style.

For example, do you like working with people or working alone? What type of tasks do you like to do?

Abortion- prochoice

“I like tasks like the first part of the survey we had to do. I like to talk about rights. I believe women should have the right to choose what happens to their bodies, especially in the case of abortion. Who am I to make someone have such a responsibility? Anyway, I like working with people rather than alone. I hate meaningless tasks and busy work.”

Abortion- prolife

“I like tasks like the first part of the survey we had to do. I like to talk about rights. I believe every life is precious and women should not be able to get abortions. Ultimately, they are responsible for caring for the life they created. Anyway, I like working with people rather than alone. I hate meaningless tasks and busy work.”

Same-sex marriage liberal

“I like tasks like the first part of the survey we had to do. I like to talk about rights. I believe two consenting adults should have the right to marry AND have their marriage respected, despite their sexuality. Businesses should not have the right to refuse them services. Anyway, I like working with people rather than alone. I hate meaningless tasks and busy work.”

Same-sex marriage conservative

“I like tasks like the first part of the survey we had to do. I like to talk about rights. I believe gay people should not be able to get married or get the benefits of marriage- it takes away from true marriage of a man and a woman. Businesses should have the right to refuse them services if they don’t agree. Anyway, I like working with people rather than alone. I hate meaningless tasks and busy work.”

Neutral (fitness)

“I like tasks like the first part of the survey we had to do. I like talking about well-being. I believe going to the gym is vital to my fitness and well-being. I work hard to make sure I eat a balanced diet and workout at least three times a week. Anyway, I like working with people rather than alone. I hate meaningless tasks and busy work.”

3. Please tell your coworker about your experiences in the workforce (or in school if you have never been employed).

For example, what kind of jobs have you had? What industries have they been in (i.e. medical, sales, government, etc.)? Which job did you like the most?

“My first job was a part time job at a coffee place near the school I went to. The people were nice. I think it taught me some work ethic because I really appreciated every dollar I earned. Since then I've worked in a corporate office in finance but I mostly do consulting now. I like the consulting the most because I get to move on my own time.”

4. Please share whatever else you think your coworker should know about you.

“This was a cool way to get to know you. Overall, I'm a good worker and I think we will work well together from reading your answers. I don't know what we will be doing but I'm excited to find out what's next.”

Taboo Manipulation Check

Presented at the end of the survey after they learn the coworker is not real

Which of the following topics did your 'coworker' talk about?

1. Abortion- prochoice "I believe women should have the right to choose what happens to their bodies, especially in the case of abortion. Who am I to make someone have such a responsibility?"
2. Abortion- prolife " I believe every life is precious and women should not be able to get abortions. Ultimately, they are responsible for caring for the life they created"
3. Same-sex marriage (in support) " I believe two consenting adults should have the right to marry AND have their marriage respected, despite their sexuality. Businesses should not have the right to refuse them services."
4. Same-sex marriage (against) " I believe gay people should not be able to get married or get the benefits of marriage- it takes away from true marriage of a man and a woman. Businesses should have the right to refuse them services if they don't agree."
5. The importance of fitness " I believe going to the gym is vital to my fitness and well-being. I work hard to make sure I eat a balanced diet and workout at least three times a week."
6. I don't know

APPENDIX G: Examples of Activity

A flyer for Fervent Reality's Fall Open House. It features a light blue border and a white central area. At the top left, there is a stylized illustration of a branch with pink cherry blossoms. The text is centered and uses a mix of bold and regular fonts. The event title 'FALL OPEN HOUSE' is in large, bold, dark red letters. The time '3:00PM-9:00PM' is also in bold dark red. The address '78890 REIGN AVENUE, MANHATTAN, NY' is in a regular dark red font. A paragraph of text describes the event, mentioning tours, refreshments, and contact information. At the bottom, a yellow banner contains the text 'YOUR DREAM HOME AWAITS!' in dark red.

FERVRENT REALITY PRESENTS:
FALL OPEN HOUSE
FIND YOUR PERFECT HOME

3:00PM-9:00PM

78890 REIGN AVENUE
MANHATTAN, NY

Thank you for your interest! Fervent Reality is excited to host an autumn open house for our clients looking to find their perfect home. In the quaint neighborhood of Royal Courts, there are several beautiful new homes available for viewing. There will be tours of the neighborhood, individual home visits, and refreshments available. Each of our representatives will take the time to explain the unique details that make a house the perfect place for you to live. Please confirm your attendance by calling (555) 785-3498 or emailing ferventrealty@ferventrealty.com.

YOUR DREAM HOME AWAITS!

Figure 10. Example 1 of Activity.



**Convenient located
on exit 69 right off
the highway!**

We sell Office Supplies!

Folders, push pins, desks, whiteboards—you name it, we have it! At the cheapest prices, we offer a deal on bulk office supplies. Maximize your business profits by reducing the costs of your office supplies.

Become one of our lifetime clients and receive an annual discount. Reply to this ad and get 30% off your next order!

CODE: BUYSUPPLIES

Figure 11. Example 2 of Activity.

Carl's Cars

Come claim your captivating car
without the costly consequences!



- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New cars• Use cars• Car parts• Car detailing | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Easy Loans• Lowest Prices in Minneapolis• Car repairs• Car histories |
|---|---|

Figure 12. Example 3 of Activity.

Questions Following Each Advertisement:

1. In general, on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being the worst and 10 being the best, how would you rate this advertisement overall?
2. Please identify any issues with the advertisement for the client.
 - a. For example: spelling or grammatical errors, missing content (name, date, time, location), lines or formatting errors, text boxes out of place, color scheme, etc.
 - i. Open text box for answers
3. What recommendations would you have for this client to make their advertisement better?
 - a. For example: use a different picture, use different font, include more details about the organization, etc.
 - i. Open text box for answers

APPENDIX H: Measures in Survey following the Activities

Measure of Task Liking

Instructions: Please use the scale to rate the following items about the activity that you did with Wilson Professional Services:

Scale: 5-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)

1. The activity was enjoyable
2. I would do that activity for fun in my spare time
3. Working for a company doing that activity would be boring
4. The activity was challenging for me
5. It took me longer than I expected to do this activity
6. I like doing other activities similar to the one in this assignment

Measure of Coworker interaction

1. Please rate the pleasantness of your interaction with your coworker (i.e. when you were getting to know each other).
 - a. Scale from 1 (very unpleasant) to 5 (very pleasant)
 - b. Please explain why your interaction was pleasant or unpleasant in 2-3 sentences
 - Open text box
2. Please rate your satisfaction with your interaction with your coworker (i.e. when you were getting to know each other).
 - a. Scale from 1 (very unsatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied)
 - b. Please explain why you are satisfied or unsatisfied with the interaction in 2-3 sentences.
 - Open text box
3. Please rate the appropriateness of your interaction for the workplace (i.e. were the topics of conversation appropriate?) on a scale of very inappropriate to very appropriate.
 - a. Scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)
 - b. Please explain why you feel the interaction was appropriate or inappropriate for the workplace in 2-3 sentences.
 - Open text box

Measure of Coworker Liking

1. How much do you like your coworker?
 - a. From 1 (dislike a lot) to 7 (like a lot).
2. How willing would you be to work with your coworker on future assignments or projects?
 - a. From 1 (very unlikely) to 7 (very likely).
3. How willing would you be to help your coworker on job-related tasks if you physically worked together (e.g., giving directions around the department, giving advice about assignments or projects, pointing out possible errors that your coworker made or problems that your coworker may encounter)?

- a. From 1 (very unlikely) to 7 (very likely).
4. I would be friends with my coworker outside of work
 - a. From 1 (very unlikely) to 7 (very likely).
5. How willing would you be to help your coworker with non-work related tasks if you physically worked together (e.g. giving advice about a personal problem, signing a birthday card, giving them a ride)
 - a. From 1 (very unlikely) to 7 (very likely).
6. Please explain why you rated your feelings towards your coworker like you did in 2-3 sentences.
 - a. Open text box

Measure of Value Alignment

1. How much did you agree with the opinions that your coworker expressed during the interactions?
 - a. Scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)

Measure of Perceived State Ingratiating Behaviors

Adapted from the MIBOS

Instructions: Please indicate the extent to which you actually used the behaviors described by the items to influence your coworker **in this study**. Do not make a judgement about the desirability or undesirability of the behaviors. Instead, only report the frequency in which you showed each of these behaviors when dealing with your coworker.

Scale: 5-point Likert-type scale: never (1), once (2), a few times (3), frequently (4), the entire time (5).

“During the interaction with my coworker, I...”

1. Showed him/her that you shared his/her opinions even though you did not actually like it.
2. Tried to let him/her know that you have a reputation for being liked.
3. Tried to make sure that he/she was aware of your successes.
4. Expressed attitudes that were similar to him/her as a way of letting him/her know that the two of us were alike.
5. Told him/her that you could learn from them.
6. Disagreed on trivial or unimportant issues but agreed on the issues in which you thought they might expect support from you.
7. Looked for opportunities to let him/her know your virtues/strengths.
8. Tried to do things to show your selfless generosity.
9. Looked for opportunities to admire him/her.
10. Let him/her know he attitudes you shared with him/her.
11. Compliment him/her on an achievement, however trivial it may actually have been to you personally.
12. Tried to persuasively present your own qualities when talking about your abilities.

13. Volunteered to help him/her even though it meant extra work for you.
14. Gave him/her compliments or told them good things about themselves.
15. Did other things to be seen as likeable.

Measure of Perceived State Authenticity

Adapted from the IAM Work Scale

Instructions: For the following questions, please focus on your **behavior during your communications with your coworker in this activity** when answering the items.

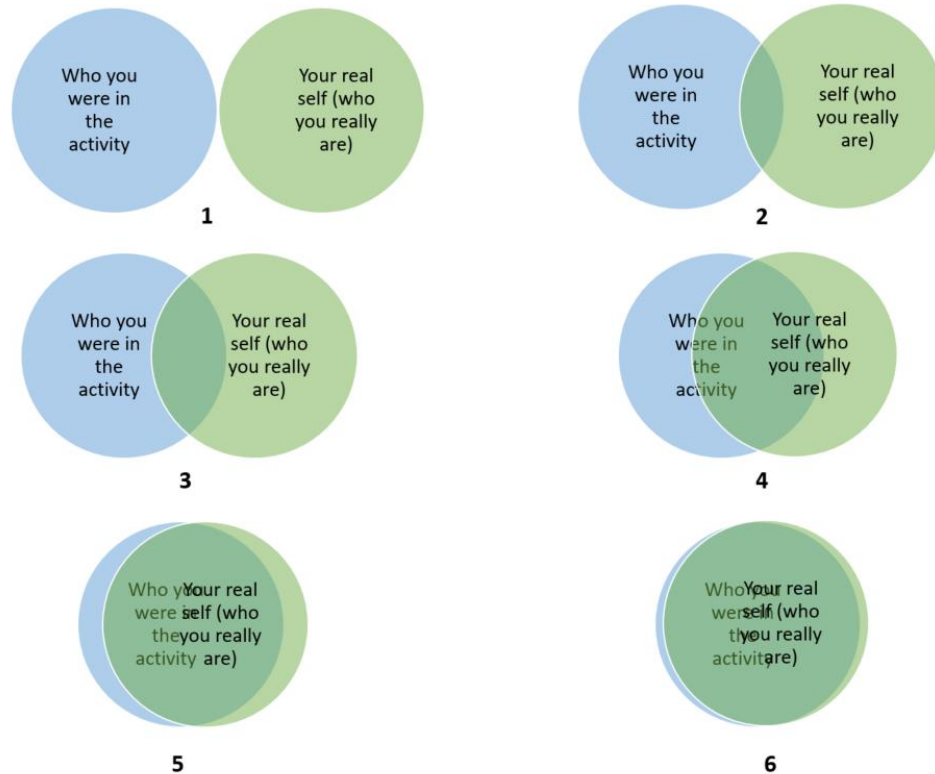
Imagine how much each statement applies to you.

Scale: 1 (“does not describe me at all”) to 7 (“describes me very well”).

1. I was true to myself during the interaction with my coworker
2. I behaved in accordance with my values and beliefs during the interaction with my coworker
3. I didn’t feel who I truly am during the interaction with my coworker
4. During the interaction, I felt out of touch with the “real me”
5. I felt the need to do what others expected me to do
6. I behaved in a manner that people expected me to behave

Real Self Overlap Measure

Please choose the degree to which you felt yourself during the interaction with your coworker.



Self-Enhancement motives scale

Instructions: Please rate your agreement to the following items regarding your specific behavior during this study:

Scale: From 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree)

1. I intended to change my behaviors to create a good impression with my coworker.
2. I tried to modify my behaviors to give good images to my coworker.
3. It was important to give a good impression to my coworker.
4. I presented myself to my coworker as being a friendly and a polite person.
5. I was sensitive to the impression about me that my coworker had.
6. I tried to create the impression that I am a “good” person to my coworker.

Self-Verification Motives scale

Instructions: Please rate your agreement to the following items regarding your specific behavior during this study:

Scale: From 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree)

1. I was truthful with my coworker about my habits and personality so that they knew what to expect from me.

2. I was honest about myself when meeting my new coworker, even if it made me appear less than ideal.
3. It was important that my coworker saw me as I see myself, even if it meant recognizing my limitations.
4. When working for the company, I tried to be honest about my personality and work style.
5. I was myself rather than trying to act like someone I'm not.

APPENDIX I: Pilot Tests Materials

Pilot Test Questions following the prompt:

1. How much do you agree with the viewpoint that was presented during your partner's response?
 - a. Scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)
2. How much do you personally care about the topic presented during your partner's response?
 - a. Scale from 1 (don't care at all) to 5 (care very much)
3. How would you rate the appropriateness of this topic for conversations at work?
 - a. Scale from 1(not appropriate at all) to 5 (very appropriate)

APPENDIX J: Qualitative Codebook

Table 25: Qualitative Codebook

Coding Category	Definition/Description of Category	Sample Quotes
Mention of Professionalism	The person described themselves or their work ethic as professional. Some descriptors from the manipulation include polished, desire to create a good impression or positive image.	“I think we could get along as coworkers and accomplish much in a very professional manner.” “I am very professional and never late. I do tasks with the best of my ability and never falter.”
Mention of Authenticity	The person described themselves as authentic. Some descriptors from the manipulation include open, honest, or natural	“I am a loyal honest person and I really do not find it hard to just be myself.” “I think it's important to be true to yourself.”
Addressed the Topic	The participant clearly and directly responded to the topic presented. This was particularly relevant for the taboo topics, though it occurred a small amount of time with the neutral topic also. Addressing the topic did not differentiate between agreeing or disagreeing with the topic.	Abortion Pro-choice: “I love to discuss rights and legalities as well. Truthfully, I believe abortion is immoral and although women do have a right with to do with their bodies as they wish, I also believe the father has a right to have a say in whether or not his child is terminated. Rape and incest should be the only exception.” Abortion Pro-Life: “I don't know why you wrote about abortions before, but I am pro-choice.” Same-Sex Marriage Liberal: “I really liked what you wrote about people's rights, gay rights in particular. I am quite liberal in my thinking and I wish more people could be open minded about other lifestyles.”

Table 25 (cont'd)

Coding Category	Definition/Description of Category	Sample Quotes
		Same-Sex Marriage Conservative: “What would you say if I told you I was gay and I think it's a shame that you feel I shouldn't marry. I'm not gay, but I think you should open your mind. Who cares if gays marry.” Neutral Fitness: “I share some of your interests like working out and eating well. We only have one body and we must take care of it.”
Mentioned Similar Topics	The participant did not directly address the topic presented but may have acknowledged similar topics such as politics or religion.	“You should know that I am a raging feminist and a fierce liberal democrat. I despise people who voted for Donald Trump.” “I've worked for Planned Parenthood. It was fantastic. I got to help people who were otherwise rejected and insulted by people who claimed to "value life."”
Mentioned Opinions in General	The participant did not directly address the topic but may have acknowledged that the person expressed an opinion, the right for people to have an opinion, their own respect for opinions, or opinions in general.	“I hate negative people and people that are judgmental. I am very easy to work with and a great listener. I don't judge people or their ideas.” “I generally like to keep an open mind about people and their beliefs and feelings though I do not stand for hatefulness or individuals who are hurtful.”

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