Special Issue Article

Authenticity Is in the Eye of the Beholder: The Exploration of Audiences' Lay Associations to Authenticity Across Five Domains

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Abstract

Existing research has proposed multiple definitions to authenticity. Instead of such a definitional approach, this article takes a bottom-up approach and provides an exploratory assessment of lay associations to authenticity. I conducted a survey that asked participants to list the words they associate with authentic restaurants, people, paintings, brands, and organizations. I find that there is substantial variance among individuals in their associations to authenticity, and the meanings they evoke also change with the domain of evaluation. People also vary in the level of importance they place on authenticity across the different domains. I discuss the implications of these findings for authenticity research and practice in psychology, marketing, management, and sociology.

Introduction

Authenticity is a value in our current societies. The benefits of authenticity are numerous: authentic restaurants are highly rated (Kovács, Carroll, & Lehman, 2014), people pay more for memorabilia if they are authentic (Newman, Diesendruck, & Bloom, 2011), people value authentic music (Derbaix & Derbaix, 2010; Grazian, 2003; Peterson, 1997), authentic baseball stadiums (Hahl, 2016), and authentic beer (Carroll & Swaminathan, 2000; Cruz, Beck, & Wezel, 2018; Frake, 2016; Verhaal, Khessina, & Dobrev, 2015). Authenticity plays a role in social movements such as the movement for grass-fed meat and dairy products (Weber, Heinze, & DeSoucey, 2008). Employees are more willing to follow authentic leaders (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008), and people are happier if they feel they are being authentic (Schlegel, Hicks, Arndt, & King, 2009).

While authenticity is in vogue, there is no consensus on what exactly authenticity means. While researchers agree that authenticity refers to something that is "genuine, real, and true" (Beverland & Farrelly, 2009; O'Connor, Carroll, & Kovács, 2017; Thompson, Rindfleisch, & Arsel, 2006), the literature has provided a plethora of definitions of authenticity. See Table 1 for an illustrative list. To name a few, researchers differentiate between indexical and iconic authenticity (Grayson & Martinec, 2004); type-, moral-, craft-, and idiosyncratic-authenticity (Carroll & Wheaton, 2009; O'Connor et al., 2017); authenticity as proximity to the creator (Newman & Dhar, 2014; Smith, Newman, & Dhar, 2015); authenticity as "being true to self" (Gino, Kouchaki, & Galinsky, 2015; Gino, Norton, & Ariely, 2010; Heidegger, 1996; Kernis, 2003; Sartre, 2012; Seligman, 2004); ethnographic, high artistic, engineering, and brand-named authenticity (Field, 2009); and authenticity as consistency, conformity, or connection (Lehman, O'Connor, Kovács, & Newman, 2019).

Why have authenticity researchers produced so many alternative frameworks, definitions, and conceptualizations of authenticity? This article investigates two possible reasons: heterogeneity among people in their lay[1] concepts and associations to authenticity, and heterogeneity of these associations to authenticity across domains. To investigate these possibilities, I designed a bottom-up exploratory survey in which participants listed the words they associate with authentic restaurants, people, paintings, brands, and

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Table 1. Authenticity definitions from the authenticity literature.

Source	Definition/Construct/Concept of Authenticity	Domain/Target
Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, and May (2004, p. 803)	[authentic leaders] Leaders who are deeply aware of how they think and behave and are perceived by others as being aware of their own and others' values/moral perspective, knowledge, and strengths; aware of the context in which they operate; and who are confident, hopeful, optimistic, resilient, and high on moral character	People
Baron (2004, p. 14)	An organizational identity that is authentic precludes certain alternatives from consideration simply on the grounds that they would not be genuine or thinkable, even if they might be profitable	Organizations
Cable, Gino, and Staats (2013, p. 6)	Alignment of "our internal experiences with our external expressions"	People
Carroll and Wheaton (2009, p. 261)	An organization would be authentic to the extent that it embodies the chosen values of its founders, owners or members	Restaurants
Carroll and Wheaton (2009, p. 273)	[type authenticity] Conformity to a code of expectations regarding the type assigned or claimed	Restaurants
Carroll and Wheaton (2009, p. 273)	[moral authenticity] Interpretations of an object or service as embued with moral meaning	Restaurants
Carroll and Wheaton (2009, p. 273)	[craft authenticity] Applications of advanced knowledge, skills, routines, tools and ingredients derived from a craft	Restaurants
Carroll and Wheaton (2009, p. 273)	[idiosyncratic authenticity] Symbolic or expressive interpretation of aspects of an entity's idiosyncrasies	Restaurants
Costas and Fleming (2009, p. 356)	That sense of "who we really are"	People, organizations
Davies (2001, p. 203)	Something is an authentic X if it is an instance or member of the class of X's	Music, art
Dutton (2003), p. 253	Authenticity refers to "what is real, genuine or true"	Paintings, art
Dutton (2003, p. 258)	[nominal authenticity] The correct identification of the origins, authorship, or provenance of an object	Paintings, art
Dutton (2003, p. 258)	[expressive authenticity] An object's character as a true expression of an individual's or a society's values and beliefs	Paintings, art
Field (2009, p. 510)	[ethnographic authenticity] Objects are considered authentic under this rubric in that they accurately represent a bounded, named culture, cultural group, or cultural identity	Objects
Field (2009, p. 511)	[high artistic authenticity] For such objects, the identity and bankable reputation of the individual maker, and, thus, the uniqueness and virtuosity of the object in question, is the paramount factor determining authenticity	Objects
Field (2009, p 511)	[engineering authenticity] Objects with such authenticity are mass-produced in factories, and therefore the individuals involved in their production are entirely invisible. However, such objects have been explicitly and precisely designed by another group of individuals whose task it is to set extremely narrow parameters that determine the physical dimensions of the objects in question and how each one of these objects must look. Here authenticity is measured by each individual object's adherence to these design standards	Objects
Field (2009, p 511)	[brand-named authenticity] These objects are also identified by and thus gain their authenticity through their ability to embody particular corporate and national iconographies	Objects
Frake (2016, p. 2)	I adopt the general meaning of the term [authenticity], which describes whether an actor is considered genuine and acts in accordance with their true character	Breweries
Frazier, Gelman, Wilson, and Hood (2009, p. 1).	Authentic objects are those that have an historical link to a person, event, time, or place of some significance	Paintings, objects
Gino, Kouchaki, and Galinsky (2015, p. 984)	Act[ing] in accordance with one's own sense of self, emotions, and values	People
Glynn and Lounsbury (2005, p. 1033)	In the context of symphonic orchestras, authenticity refers to programming that maintains consistency with the classical canon and genre conventions	Orchestras

Table 1. (continued)

Source	Definition/Construct/Concept of Authenticity	Domain/Target
Grayson and Martinec (2004, p. 298)	[indexical authenticity] Indexicality distinguishes "the real thing" from its copies	Brands, products
Grayson and Martinec (2004, p. 298)	[iconic authenticity] Something whose physical manifestation resembles something that is indexically authentic	Brands, products
Grazian (2003, pp. 10–11)	[Authenticity] can refer to the ability of a place or event to conform to an idealized representation of reality: that is, to a set of expectations regarding how such a thing ought to look, sound, and feel. At the same time, authenticity can refer to the credibility or sincerity of a performance and its ability to come off as natural and effortless	Organizations, events
Holt (2002, p. 83)	To be authentic, brands must be disinterested; they must be perceived as invented and disseminated by parties without an instrumental economic agenda, by people who are intrinsically motivated by their inherent value	Brands
Jiménez (2008, p. 1530)	Mexican immigrants define "authentic" Mexican ethnicity, and Mexican Americans are treated as ethnic outsiders when they are unable to live up to the criteria for group membership that coethnics impose	People
Kernis and Goldman (2006, p. 293)	The unobstructed operation of one's true, or core, self	People
Lehman, O'Connor, Kovács, and Newman (2019, p. 3)	Authenticity as consistency between an entity's internal values and its external expressions	People, organizations, products
Lehman et al. (2019, p. 3)	Authenticity as conformity of an entity to the norms of its social category	People, organizations, products
Lehman et al. (2019, p. 3)	Authenticity as connection between an entity and a person, place, or time as claimed	People, organizations, products
Morhart, Malär, Guevremont, Girardin, and Grohmann (2015, p. 203)	An authentic brand entails perceptions of a brand being faithful and true toward itself and its consumers	Brands
Newman and Dhar (2014, p. 371)	Products from the original factory as more authentic and valuable than identical products made elsewhere	Product
Rao, Monin, and Durand (2005, p. 969)	Authenticity means both originality and conformity to the conventions of a category or genre, and propose that the important thing is to conform to some of the conventions most of the time	Restaurants
Sheldon, Ryan, Rawsthorne, and Ilardi (1997, p. 1381)	Authenticity refers to behavior that is phenomenally experienced as being authored by the self or internally caused	People
Skilton and Purdy (2017, p. 103)	We define authenticity evaluations as a class of appraisive judgments (Okoye, 2009) that observers make concerning claims about CSR activities and the motives of the actors making these claims. Authenticity evaluations ask whether the claims firms make about CSR activities are as they should be, given the evaluator's expectations	Organizations
Trilling (1972, p. 92)	Authentic entities are what they appear to be or claim to be	People, organizations, products, brands
Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, and Peterson (2008, p. 94)	A pattern of leader behavior that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate to foster greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development	People

Note. Each definition listed here is an exact quote. References provided here are intended to be illustrative not exhaustive. Definitions are listed in alphabetical order of the first author. This list heavily draws on a current literature review by Lehman et al. (2019).

34

organizations. The article offers two primary contributions with this bottom-up design. First is the potential that this design captures meanings and words considered authentic by laypeople but missed by the existing top-down scholarly literature and its frameworks. Second, it uncovers the variance in authenticity usage within and between laypeople, and within and between different domains where authenticity should be relevant.

The rest of the article is structured as follows. First, I provide a brief introduction to the authenticity literatures in psychology, marketing, philosophy, sociology, and management, in which I highlight the main approaches and definitions authenticity researchers have identified. This review helps me make the point that most authenticity research is based on top-down approaches, and will serve as a benchmark to which the findings of my survey can be compared. Second, I make a case for taking audiences' lay associations to authenticity seriously, and I propose a typology of audiences to capture the variance in authenticity usage within and between laypeople and within and between different domains. Third, I discuss the results of this survey to map out the authenticity associations of more than 250 participants. Fourth, I interpret the survey results in light of the existing literature in authenticity and discuss the extent to which my results are in line with the existing literature. Importantly, I shall identify words and meanings of authenticity that are identified by laypeople but may not receive a central role in the authenticity literature. Finally, I conclude by discussing the implications and the limitations of this research.

A (Brief) Literature Review on Authenticity

Authenticity as a concept has attracted interest from multiple academic disciplines. Here I provide a short overview of the main streams of research in psychology, philosophy, marketing, management, and sociology. My review draws on a framework proposed by Lehman et al. (2019), who provide a comprehensive literature review of 452 authenticity-related articles. They propose that most of the definitions and approaches to authenticity can be classified into three main approaches or "lenses" to authenticity: "authenticity as consistency," "authenticity as conformity," and "authenticity as connection." In the literature review below, I follow their classification. I do not aim at giving an exhaustive literature review—readers interested in the details are referred to Lehman et al. (2019). Rather, the goal is to provide a set of concepts for the typology of audiences and to provide a baseline to which the findings of the current article can be compared.

Authenticity as Consistency

A major perspective in the authenticity literature defines authenticity as "the unobstructed operation of one's true, or core, self" (Kernis & Goldman, 2006, p. 293) or "authenticity as consistency between an entity's internal values and its external expressions" (Lehman et al., 2019, p. 3). A person is authentic if her actions are true to her values (Cable, Gino, & Staats, 2013; Wood, Linley, Maltby, Baliousis, & Joseph, 2008). Carroll and Wheaton (2009, p. 255) discuss a related concept of authenticity, "moral authenticity," which refers to "whether the decisions behind the enactment and operation of an entity reflect sincere choices (i.e., choices true to one's self) rather than socially scripted responses." This "true to self" meaning of authenticity originates from Ancient Greece (Aristotle, 1886), and became central in existential philosophy (Heidegger, 1996; Sartre, 2012), and also constitute most psychological work on authenticity (Gino et al., 2015; Gino et al., 2010; Kernis, 2003; Seligman, 2004).

Researchers have argued that the increased focus of one's true self may be due to the "modern condition" (Potter, 2010; Sartre, 2012). While traditional societies have provided individuals with a set of shared values, such as religion or traditions, the vanishing role of traditions and religion in modern societies leads individuals to search for inner meaning (Baumeister, 1991; Schlegel et al., 2009). According to this approach, authenticity means living in harmony with one's true self, divergence between actions and values would lead to inauthentic behavior, "cheating" both the self and others. The implications of such divergences between the inner values and actions lead to burgeoning research in psychology, including research in topics such as the monitoring of the self (Snyder, 1987), impression management (Leary & Kowalski, 1990), or self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

While the authenticity as "true to the self" approach is a dominant approach in the psychological literature on authenticity, this approach is also prominent in sociology and management. The "backstage" versus "frontstage" distinction in Goffman (1959) parallels the same disconnect between the inner self and the displayed self. The authentic leadership literature calls leaders authentic to the extent that they are aware of how they think and behave and that the behavior is consistent with their thinking and their morals and values (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Walumbwa et al., 2008). Organizational sociology and marketing scholars have extended this consistency approach to organizations and brands: An organization or a brand is authentic to the extent that it "does what it preaches" (Carroll & Wheaton, 2009; Skilton & Purdy, 2017).

Authenticity as Conformity

Another common approach to authenticity calls an entity authentic if it conforms to prevailing cognitive or social categories. In Lehman et al.'s (2019) words: "conformity of an entity to the norms of its social category" (p. 3). For example, a country musician is authentic to the extent that he

looks like, sings like, and dresses like a prototypical country musician. Carroll and Wheaton (2009) refers to this meaning of authenticity as "type authenticity." Grayson and Martinec (2004) call this approach iconic authenticity: "something whose physical manifestation resembles something that is indexically authentic" (p. 298). Glynn and Lounsbury (2005) calls a classical music concert authentic "if its program is consistent with the classical canon and genre conventions" (p. 1033).

The authenticity as conformity lens builds on two major theoretical foundations: the category literature in cognitive science (Murphy, 2004) and the institutional and ecological literature in sociology and management (Hannan, Pólos, & Carroll, 2007; Kovács & Johnson, 2014). The cognitive science approach to categories focuses on how categories structure and influence cognition. Categories facilitate the organization, recall, and communication of information (Murphy, 2004). Sociological approaches to type authenticity take a more macro view and investigate how genres, institutions, and norms influence organizational and cultural categories. Extending the category literature, Rosch (1973) demonstrates that not all category members are equally representative of the category. For instance, a chair is a more typical furniture than an ottoman. The link between typicality and type authenticity is that typicality leads to authenticity because prototypical instances are "real" instances of the categories, and are closer to the essence of the category.

Another side of the "authenticity as conformity" approach is the "authenticity as uniqueness" approach. Proponents of this view assert that, in opposition to conformity, it is being unique that leads to authenticity. Two bodies of literature inform this view. One, as expounded above, is the moral authenticity literature, which argues that individuals need to be consistent with themselves and follow their own passions, even if it goes against societal norms (van der Laan & Velthuis, 2016). Choice of self-selected practices or consumption items, in this view, can replace the traditional channels of identity, which stem from belonging to a group or society. Second, in a more active sense, differentiation from the "crowd" can signal one's uniqueness and lead to exclusivity (Brewer, 1991). Carroll and Wheaton (2009) argues that one way to achieve such uniqueness is to be connected to a fact or legend about the idiosyncratic nature of the entity, especially when relevant audiences create a story or a discourse about this idiosyncrasy. A good example of such idiosyncratic authenticity is a founding myth, such as "Coffee Trieste [in San Francisco] was the first place on the West Coast to serve espresso."

Another lens to authenticity is termed "craft authenticity" (Carroll & Wheaton, 2009; O'Connor et al., 2017), and relates to "the application of advanced knowledge, skills, routines, tools and ingredients derived from a craft" (Carroll & Wheaton, 2009, p. 273). This concept of authenticity is related to "authenticity as conformity," but the focus here is

somewhat different, as it involves a shift from outcomes to processes. The criterion of authenticity here is whether the process of production is "true to craft," rather than being true to certain institutionalized types or genre as in the case of type authenticity. In case of restaurants, for example, craft authenticity refers to the artistry and mastery of the chef (Carroll & Wheaton, 2009). Note that craft authenticity often also involves a wider set of skills and relations, such as knowing the profession and the relevant peers to obtain the right set of supplies and to learn the right set of practices. In this sense, craft authenticity can signal authenticity in a wider, "belonging to the right crowd" authentic identity.

Authenticity as Connection

Finally, researchers have argued that connectedness in space or time to a given origin or source can be an important dimension of authenticity. Lehman et al. (2019) defines it as "authenticity as a connection between an entity and a person, place, or time as claimed" (p. 3). A key concept here is indexical authenticity. Grayson and Martinec (2004) define indexical authenticity as a spatiotemporal link from an object, organization, brand, or a person to its original source. For example, a Beatles shirt is indexically authentic if it was worn by John Lennon at a 1968 concert. Relatedly, Dutton (2003) refers to "nominal authenticity," which he defines as "the correct identification of the origin, authorship or provenance of an object" (p. 259). For instance, a painting is a nominally authentic Rembrandt only if Rembrandt painted it.

There is abundant evidence that people value this type of authenticity. Grayson and Shulman (2000) conducted interviews with participants and asked them why they value their sentimental possessions. They found that many of their respondents used versions of indexical authenticity as a justification. For example, one of their participants explained "that she would not replace a necklace with an exact replica, because 'it was given to me from my mom at a specific time, for a specific reason.'" (p. 20) Similarly, Beverland (2005) found that consumers valued "heritage and pedigree" and the brand's "relationship to the place." Finally, multiple pieces of research by Newman and colleagues demonstrate that consumers value such connections to the source and origin in the case of celebrity memorabilia, artworks, and products (Newman & Bloom, 2012; Newman & Dhar, 2014; Newman et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2015).

Audiences and Socially Constructed Authenticity: Why Should We Care About Lay Associations to Authenticity?

All the definitions in the preceding section are top-down approaches to defining authenticity: They assess authenticity in the "a person, an object, or an organization is

authentic if X" vein. Yet there seems to be a general agreement among researchers that authenticity is frequently socially constructed. That is, in most cases authenticity is not inherent in the features and properties of the object; rather, it rests in the "eye of the beholder" (Kovács et al., 2014). Authenticity judgments are subjective and intersubjective, and rely on interpretation of audiences (Beverland, 2005; Beverland & Farrelly, 2009; Carroll & Wheaton, 2009; Kolar & Zabkar, 2010; Rose & Wood, 2005). Authenticity judgments are influenced by not only the objective properties of the object of the person but the point of view of the people making the judgment (Sidali & Hemmerling, 2014), their expertise and expectations (Belk & Costa, 1998), and their goals (Beverland & Farrelly, 2009). As Kovács et al. (2014) sums it up: "authenticity is ultimately not about facts per se but rather about interpretations regarding those facts" (p. 460).

To what extent do audiences' valuations of authenticity agree with the frameworks and definitions researchers have put forward? To better understand authenticity-related processes, it is important to know the audience segments of authenticity judgments, the dimensions and attributes these audience segments care about, how stable they are, and their relative sizes in the population. In other words, it is imperative to understand lay associations to authenticity and their relative prevalence across audiences and domains, such as when evaluating the authenticity of people, products, or organizations. Understanding audience's approaches to authenticity would be important not only for marketing but also for management theories that locate organizational identity in their audiences (Hsu & Hannan, 2005), or for authentic leadership theories that make often implicit assumptions about what "followers" of leaders value as authentic.

Surprisingly, research on such mapping of audiences' lay associations of authenticity is rather scant, with two major streams of literature as exceptions. One is the qualitative research stream in marketing that studies authenticity. A decade ago, Rose and Wood (2005) called for more research on how "personal predilections" influence the construction of authenticity, and since then a few important steps toward this goal have been made. As mentioned, Beverland and Farrelly (2009) studied the construction of authenticity in light of the goals of the evaluator making the authenticity judgments. They demonstrate that there are three major types of goals customers may have when evaluating authenticity: control, connection, and virtue. They assert that each of these goals reflects wider sociocultural norms, and investigate how people navigate these goals across brands, objects, or experiences. Morhart, Malär, Guevremont, Girardin, and Grohmann (2015) developed a scale measuring consumers' perceived brand authenticity, and found that participants distinguish four dimensions of brand authenticity: credibility, integrity, symbolism, and continuity. Grayson

and Shulman (2000) interviewed people and asked them to give reasons why they value their sentimental possessions, and found that participants tend to value objects that are irreplaceable because they have specific memories and acts connected to them. Neider and Schriesheim (2011) investigated lay associations of authentic leadership.

Another research stream that takes social construction seriously can be found in organization studies. In a series of papers, Carroll and colleagues argue that definitions of authenticity should not be predefined; rather, one should look at audience evaluations of authenticity to judge what is authentic (Kovács et al., 2014; Lehman, Kovács, & Carroll, 2014; O'Connor et al., 2017). In the domain of restaurants, they argue that a restaurant is authentic to the extent that their relevant audiences call it authentic.

While the above articles make important steps toward understanding lay associations regarding authenticity and the social construction of authenticity, they only provide a partial picture by not investigating systematically cross-domain and cross-person heterogeneity of lay associations to authenticity. My research aims to contribute to this line of research by exploring cross-domain and cross-person heterogeneity of lay associations to authenticity.

What is at stake? It is important to note that I am not claiming that a top-down research approach is erroneous. Rather, I argue that such a definitional approach is valid only to the extent that the researcher's definition maps to the associations by relevant audiences. For example, Kovács et al. (2014) demonstrates that the family-ownership contributes to a restaurant's perceived authenticity (Kovács et al., 2014). This finding is in line with the finding of the current article, which shows that about 2% of the respondents in the survey list family-ownership as a relevant association to restaurant authenticity. Yet, by focusing on an aspect of authenticity that is only deemed relevant by 2% of the respondents, one would miss most of the picture, that is, that most people do not think that family-ownership is a relevant attribute. Such an approach may be acceptable as a first step of demonstrating that certain attributes matter for authenticity, but it is suboptimal, for example, for customer segmentation purposes.

A Typology of Audiences' Lay Associations to Authenticity

Audience Heterogeneity in Word Associations to Authenticity

What do lay audiences mean when they refer to authenticity? How much heterogeneity exists in lay associations to authenticity? I explore three possible dimensions of heterogeneity: heterogeneity in the words people associate with authenticity *within* and *across* different domains, and heterogeneity in the extent to which people value authenticity.

Table 2. A typology of audience.

Within domain similarity of the authenticity concepts used by the individual	High	Type 2: People who hold multiple concepts of authenticity, but in a given situation invoke only one meaning.	Type 1: People who care about one meaning of authenticity only, and this orientation is stable across domains.
	Low	Type 4: Finally, there may be people who do not have a consistent concept of authenticity.	Type 3: People who hold multiple concepts of authenticity and they invoke all these concepts in all settings.
		Low	High
		Across domain similarity of the authenticity concepts used by the individual	

In terms of within-domain variance, it is possible that even when the target of evaluation is the same, different people may evoke different meanings of authenticity. For example, some may think of authenticity as connection to a place (e.g., a bottle of olive oil is authentic because it was produced in Sicily), while others consider production techniques as a definition of authenticity (e.g., a bottle of olive oil is authentic because it was hand-pressed). Or, when talking about the authenticity of people, some may think that the relevant criteria are honesty and transparency, while others may think that the most important question is whether the person is unique and creative. Some people may have a complex representation of authenticity and apply multiple concepts of authenticity simultaneously to a given domain. An example for this would be a person who would only call a restaurant authentic only if is true to its cuisine heritage and it is also honest and transparent.

In terms of across-domain variance, even if all people were to have the same exact associations to authenticity within a domain, their associations may vary across domains. For example, people may think that when evaluating the authenticity of a person, the most important criterion is whether the person is honest and trusting, while when evaluating a restaurant, the criteria of authenticity is not whether the restaurant is honest and trusting, rather whether the food served conforms to the typical offering of restaurants in that cuisine category (e.g., an Italian restaurant may not be considered authentic if it does not serve pasta).

The possible combinations of these meanings and variances across domains and individuals give rise to multiple possible audience types. Here I outline a simple typology with regard to lay notions of authenticity. My aim in this section is to propose a typology, which I will then substantiate with an exploratory survey. Table 2 visualizes the typology.

Type 1: People who care about one meaning of authenticity only, and this orientation is stable across domains. For example, some people may call an entity authentic if it is prototypical to its category, be the entity an organization (a Mexican restaurant is authentic if has a high resemblance to typical Mexican restaurants), a person who is typical to their claimed identity (Jay is an authentic country singer because he dresses like other country singers and sings about country themes), or an object (a building is authentic art deco because it looks like other art deco buildings). Or, a person may invoke the moral consistency meaning of authenticity both when assessing other people ("he follows his moral drive") and when assessing organizations ("a restaurant follows socially responsible production practices"). (Top right quadrant in Table 2)

Type 2: People who hold multiple concepts of authenticity, but in a given situation invoke only one meaning. For example, a person who invokes the consistency or moral meaning when assessing the authenticity of other people but invokes the connection meaning when assessing the authenticity of products. (Top left quadrant in Table 2)

Type 3: People who hold multiple concepts of authenticity and they invoke all these concepts in all settings. For example, one may apply both the conformity and the connection interpretation when assessing organizations, "This restaurant is authentic Japanese in that it serves dishes typical to Japan" but at the same time "this restaurant is not authentic Japanese because the chef is from Italy" (Kim & Baker, 2017). Or, as another example, one may consider a rap singer authentic because his lyrics are prototypical to the genre, but not authentic because, as revealed in public interviews, he did not write his own lyrics and he does not believe in their message. (Bottom right quadrant in Table 2)

Type 4: Finally, there may be people who do not have a consistent concept of authenticity. (Bottom left quadrant in Table 2)

The relative size and prevalence of these audience segments may have far-reaching implications. For example, firms who want to market their product as authentic better have some understanding of the relevant audience's lay notions of authenticity. As an example, if one wants to open a pizzeria and want to make it an authentic pizzeria, they would want to know if the local clientele cares more about typicality (make the pizza in the Neapolitan way), or the connections to Italy (import the ingredients from Italy; hire Italian cooks), or the consistency and moral aspect (family-owned and operated, follows ethical practices). Knowing

what the audiences care about when evaluating authenticity helps organizations orient their marketing or business development efforts.

It is important for researchers too to understand the audience types of authenticity. For example, researchers studying authentic leadership in organizations show that organization members are more likely to follow authentic leaders who are "true to their values" (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). But what if some or most employees hold different conceptions of authenticity? If researchers do not consider possible varieties of the concepts held by relevant audiences, they may mis-specify their model and may arrive at erroneous conclusions. I discuss such cases later in the article.

Audience Heterogeneity in the Importance of Authenticity Across Domains

Besides the heterogeneity of authenticity words' associations across people and across domains, people may vary in terms of how much they care about authenticity. If audience segments systematically vary in the extent to which they value authenticity in different domains (e.g., some care about authenticity for brands but not authenticity for persons), then that may influence the concepts they associate with authenticity and may also influence the extent to which they use similar concepts of authenticity for the different domains. Understanding these heterogeneities may help researchers in assessing the extent to which they can generalize their findings from one domain to another.

The next question then is as follows: Does this proposed typology describe people's lay associations to authenticity, that is, do people vary along the extent to which they use different concepts of authenticity across different domains, and do they vary in the extent to which they use simple or complex notions of authenticity for any given domain? Because prior literature does not provide much evidence regarding this question, I conducted an exploratory survey.

A Survey of Lay Associations to Authenticity

Sample and Methods

To explore lay people's associations to authenticity, I took a bottom-up approach and asked participants to list the words they associate with authenticity. Such an open-ended format is apt to explore conceptual maps (Geer, 1991) and "to define [participant's] own issue space by naming issues that were salient to [them]" (RePass, 1971, p. 391).

The survey asked about word associations to authenticity in five domains: authenticity of people, organizations, brands, paintings, and restaurants. I chose these five

domains because they represent major types of domains authenticity scholars study.[2] Consider the list of definitions provided in Table 1: Out of the 36 definitions listed, 12 are about the authenticity of people, nine are related to the authenticity of brands or products, 14 are related to organizational authenticity, six are specifically about restaurant authenticity, and five are about the authenticity of paintings and art. The authenticity of people is commonly studied in psychology, management, and philosophy (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May, 2004; Baumeister, 1991; Gino et al., 2015; Heidegger, 1996; Jiménez, 2008; Schlegel, Hicks, King, & Arndt, 2011). The authenticity of brands is often the focus of marketing studies (Beverland, 2005; Beverland & Farrelly, 2009; Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Morhart et al., 2015); the authenticity of paintings is often the focus of art, psychology, and sociological studies (Baugh, 1988; Koontz & Joshi, 2017; Newman & Bloom, 2012). The authenticity of organizations in general (Alhouti, Johnson, & Holloway, 2016), and the authenticity of restaurants in specific, is a common topic of the management and sociology literatures (Carroll & Wheaton, 2009; Kovács et al., 2014; Lu & Fine, 1995).

First, participants were asked to answer open-ended questions: "Please list at least three words that you associate with an authentic X," where X was substituted with "person," "restaurant," "brand," "painting," and "organization." Each domain was shown on a separate screen, and the questions were presented in a randomized order.[3] For each domain, participants could list up to five items. Although the question suggested to list at least three words for each domain, this was not a required criterion to move to the next page. Each survey included two attention checks: After two randomly chosen questions about authenticity associations, a question was included asking "What kind of object/person/entity did we just ask you about?" and a drop-down list appeared listing the five domains included in the study and a few additional filler domains, such as "buildings" and "furniture." Participants who failed any of these attention checks were dropped from the analyses.

Next, participants were asked "How important is it for you that a person/organization/brand/restaurant/painting is authentic?" Participant answered these questions on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 = "not at all important" to 5 = "extremely important." Each survey concluded with basic demographics questions.

In all, 300 U.S.-based participants were recruited through Amazon MTurk. Each participant received US$1 for completing the survey. Out of the 300 participants who completed this survey, 257 passed the prespecified attention checks (average age = 37; 61% male; 38% with less than a completed college education; 48% with completed BA; 14% with MA, JD, or PhD). Below I report results using this sample.

Table 3. The 15 most common answers in each domain to the "Please list at least three words that you associate with an authentic X."

Brand		Organization		Person		Restaurant		Painting	
original	54	honest	75	honest	137	tasteful	40	original	95
quality	49	trustful	44	real	46	original	37	unique	52
honest	44	transparent	29	genuine	41	food	34	real	46
unique	40	original	16	kind	39	quality	32	artistic	25
real	32	responsible	16	trustful	29	fresh	30	beauty	22
trustful	28	true-to	16	sincere	28	tradition	27	creative	19
genuine	24	caring	15	loyal	24	good	24	colorful	17
true-to	22	real	15	true-to	21	real	24	expensive	17
expensive	15	genuine	14	caring	19	delicious	23	genuine	17
loyal	13	good	13	friendly	19	unique	22	nice	15
good	11	loyal	13	nice	17	cultured	19	old	15
reliable	11	ethical	12	unique	17	clean	18	true-to	14
stylish	10	reliable	12	loving	16	honest	17	color	12
popular	8	money	11	good	12	service	17	valuable	12
price	8	sincere	11	humble	12	genuine	13	good	11
Herfindahl–Hirschman indices									
0.0924		0.1098		0.1256		0.0730		0.1139	

Note. The numbers next to the words represent the number of participants (out of the 257) who listed that word for that domain.

Because the survey included open-ended questions, some data cleaning and coding was required. The 257 participants provided 1,306 unique answers to the question "Please list at least three words that you associate with an authentic X." Many of these answers were mis-spellings, singular or plural versions of the same words, or alternative formats for the same concept (e.g., "trust-worthy," "trustful," "trustable," "trusted," "trusting," "trustworthiness," "trustworthy," "trustworty"). I cleaned the dataset for mis-spellings and for close duplicates—for example, if a participant lists "high quality" and "best quality" in the brand domain, both terms are coded as "quality" and will be only counted once in the brand domain.[4] After this data cleaning, 997 unique answers remained, 376 of which appeared more than once, and 146 of which appeared more than 5 times. To further reduce the noise in the data, I analyze the answers based on the 376 keywords that were mentioned at least twice.

Using the sample of answers with these 376 keywords, I find that summed across the five domains for each respondent, the mean number of words mentioned per respondent was 14.354, with $SD = 3.921$, the range was from 2 to 25. Analyzed by the five domains separately, respondents on average mention 2.871 words, with $SD = 1.030$ and range = 0–5. The number of words listed do not vary significantly across the five domains (one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), $N = 1,285$, $F = 2.21$, $p = .065$).

I note that the richness of these answers is astounding, and participants have come up with many more authenticity-related words than I had expected: contrast the 376

words to the 91 words in the authenticity-scale by Kovács et al. (2014), the most comprehensive list I could find. That is, this bottom-up approach resulted in a much richer set of concepts and words than previously used in the literature.[5] Because the list of answers participants provided is in itself an important contribution to the literature (e.g., researchers can use these as keywords in future text analysis, to augment the scale provided by Kovács et al., 2014), I included in the appendix the list of answers that have appeared at least 3 times.

Results

Exploratory Patterns From Tabulating the Data

As a first step in analyzing the data, Table 3 tabulates the 15 most common answers to the question "Please list at least three words that you associate with an authentic X" for each five domains. Table 4, which is based on the same underlying data, presents the tabulation of answers in a different format: It lists the words that are mentioned across multiple domains, and it lists the words that are highly diagnostic to a specific domain.

Multiple patterns are worth noting. First, these bottom-up answers largely correspond to the concepts studied by authenticity scholars. The most commonly mentioned words, such as "original," "real," and "genuine," are commonly used in the definitions of authenticity in the literature—for example "genuine" is used 3 times in the list of definitions provided in Table 1. These words are also

Table 4. List of words that are (i) common across domains, and (ii) that are highly diagnostic to specific domains.

(i) Words that are listed at least 5 times across all domains: real, genuine, original, unique, true, good

(ii) List of words that are highly diagnostic to a given domain (at least twice as common in a given domain than in the other domains altogether)

Brand: product, durable, logo, clothing, affordable, known, trendy, famous, memorable, name, reputable, dependable, innovative, popular, stylish, tested, quality, focused, company, high quality

Organization: business, structure, organized, leader, efficient, transparent, moral, work, fair, helpful, successful, profitable, people, professional, charitable, hardworking, responsible, money, company, established, ethical, respectable, straightforward, generous, reputable, safe, understanding

Painting: artistic, artist, paint, canvas, oil, signed, signature, beauty, colorful, color, emotional, detailed, rare, meaningful, one of a kind, handmade, verifiable, not copy, creative, valuable, classic, old, prestigious, personable, pure, historic, original, thoughtful

Person: kind, human, compassionate, humble, confident, alive, humility, funny, likable, loving, smart, personality, sincere, faithful, friendly, straightforward, generous, believable, honest, open, loyal, truthful, caring, understanding, giving, integrity

Restaurant: delicious, healthy, atmosphere, ethnic, chef, food, tasteful, cultured, fresh, homemade, service, local, tradition, family, clean, organic, high quality, regular, price, simple

highly associated with authenticity in the keyword list compiled by Kovács et al. (2014). This lends face validity to the survey. Second, some words, such as "quality," are more commonly mentioned than I had expected from the literature review of the scholarly work on authenticity. Some other words, such as "colorful," is in general not considered to be related to authenticity according to the scholarly literature. Third, Table 4 illustrates that there is some overlap between the concepts used in the five domains. For example, the word "honest" is strongly related to authenticity in four of the five domains. Yet there is variance in what words are listed for each domain (e.g., "stylish" is listed for brands but not in the other domains; "humble" is listed for person but not in the other domains), and there is also significant variance in the relative importance of the concepts across domains (e.g., "unique" is important for the authenticity of brands and paintings but less important for the authenticity of persons and organizations). I return to the interpretation of these issues later, after presenting the statistical tests.

Introducing the Term-Frequency Matrix for the Statistical Analyses of the Survey Responses

To study the similarity of authenticity concepts across the domains using statistical, I build on data analyses techniques commonly used in computational linguistics and sociology (Manning & Schütze, 1999; Widdows, 2004). Specifically, I restructure the data to a three-dimensional array, $L_{i,j,k}$, in which i denotes the participant identifier, j denotes the keyword, and k denotes the domain. A cell in the array is 1 if participant i listed that word j in domain k, and 0 otherwise. Because there are 257 participants, 376 words that appeared at least twice, and five domains, this yields an 257×376×5 array. Table 5 provides an illustration with the subset of the data. Such an array is called a term-frequency array in computational linguistics (Manning & Schütze, 1999).

Variance of Authenticity Associations Across Domains

To measure the extent to which the words vary across domains, I calculate the pairwise correlations across domains between the number of times the words were listed as relevant by participants in each domain.[6] To do this, I first sum up for each of the 376 words the number of times it was mentioned as relevant in the brand, organization, person, restaurant, and painting domains. Formally, this yields a 376×5 array, $S_{j,k}$. In which each cell is the sum of the row values of $L_{i,j,k}$: $S_{j,k} = \sum_{i=1}^{257} L_{i,j,k}$. Taking the pairwise correlations of the five columns, we get the correlations between the domains, as shown in Table 6. The pairwise correlations indicate that while the different dimensions of authenticity are positively related to each other, the strength of the relationship varies from the rather weak correlation of .23 between the authenticity of paintings and the authenticity of persons, to the quite strong correlation of .82 between the authenticity of organizations and persons. These pairwise correlation values speak to the generalizability of scales that need to be used in the different domains. For example, Kovács et al. (2014) developed an authenticity scale for the restaurant domain—the pairwise correlations in Table 6 indicate that this scale could be potentially used to assess the authenticity of brands but should not be used to study the judgments of authenticity of nonspecific organizations or the authenticity of persons. Table 6 also suggests that an authenticity scale developed for a person's authenticity may be applied to assess the authenticity of (nonspecific) organizations.

Note that there is a difference across domains in the level of consensus on what words are related to authenticity. The clearest consensus, as indicated by the highest Herfindahl–Hirschman concentration index in Table 3, is in the authenticity of person domain, where by far the most commonly listed word is "honest," with 137 mentions, while the second most mentioned concept is "real," with 46 mentions

Table 5. Illustration of the term-frequency array.

Participant ID	Believable	Caring	Compassionate	Confident	Different	Friendly	Fun	Funny	Genuine	Good	Honest	Human	Integrity	Kind	Likable	Loving	Loyal	Nice	Open
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
5	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Note. This array is a subset of the large 257×376×5 array, and lists the values for the "Person" domain, for the first 8 participants, and for 19 keywords. 1 means that the participant listed the keyword, and 0 means she did not list it.

Table 6. The correlation across domains the number of times a given keyword is listed.

	Brands	Organizations	Paintings	Persons
Organizations	.6415			
Paintings	.6835	.2097		
Persons	.5834	.8159	.2288	
Restaurants	.5709	.2850	.4589	.2803

Note. Keyword-level analyses: $N = 376$. All correlations are significant at $p < .01$.

(137 mentions are significantly different from 46 mentions according to a *t* test, $N = 514$, $p < .001$).[7] The words listed for the authenticity of paintings also display relatively high consensus: 95 participants mentioned that they associate "original" with authentic, while 52 participants mentioned "unique" and 46 mentioned "real" (95 is significantly different from 52 and 46, $p < .001$ according to a *t* test, $N = 514$. 52 and 46 are not different from each other significantly, $p = .326$). In the domain of organizations, "honest" was most strongly associated to authenticity (75 mentions), followed by "trustful" (44 mentions) and "transparent" (29 mentions) (75 is different from 44, $p < .001$; 44 is not different from 29, $p = .062$). The answers in the brand and restaurant domains provide more dispersion, and there are no clear winners: For brands, the most important concepts are "original" (listed 54 times), "quality" (49), and "honest" (44), but there is no break in the distribution, and "unique" (40) and "real" (32) closely follows (54 is not different from 49, $p = .29$, nor from 44, $p = .13$, but significantly different from 40, $p = .03$, and 32, $p < .01$). The answers are most dispersed in the restaurant domain: The most commonly mentioned words "tasteful" and "original" are only mentioned 40 and 37 times, respectively. These patterns have important implications for authenticity research: In domains with high consensus on what authenticity words matter, such as "honest" in the person domain, one or a few questions may be enough to capture whether a participant holds a person authentic or not. In this domain, also, authenticity perceptions are likely to be binary, and a person will be either viewed to be authentic or not. In other domains, however, where there is less agreement on what dimensions of authenticity matter, probing along more dimensions of authenticity is needed to assess whether an entity is viewed as authentic. Also, in domains with dispersed dimensions, it is likely that authenticity will be seen as a scale ("how authentic is X").

While Table 6 shows the pairwise correlation of the concepts of authenticity across the five domains, and while Figure 1 shows the pairwise similarities of authenticity words, one can also represent this information simultaneously using Correspondence Analysis (Greenacre, 2017). Figure 2 displays the result of a two-dimensional

Correspondence Analysis (only words with at least five mentions are shown, because otherwise the figure would be too crowded). The squares and the corresponding labels in capital letters correspond to the five domains, and the words in lower case represent the words listed in the survey answers. Proximity on this figure means a closer relationship. That is, the domains that are close to each other on Figure 2 (e.g., person and organization) have similar words associated to them. Domains that are farther apart (e.g., person and restaurant) have different words associated to them. Words that are close to each other are more closely related to each other (e.g., "not copy" and "handmade" are often mentioned together), and words that are close to the domain labels are more related to the average conceptualization of authenticity in that domain (e.g., "verifiable" is close to the center of the painting domain).

Clusters of Authenticity Associations

The dispersion of words used to describe authenticity may not necessarily indicate dispersion of concepts of authenticity used by participants if the words used are synonyms and are used interchangeably. One can explore the similarity of the words by calculating the row-wise correlations of the term-frequency matrix $S_{j,k}$ discussed above. Such correlations can be used for dimensionality reduction or for hierarchical clustering to see what authenticity words "hang together." Figure 1 shows the hierarchical clustering results for each of the five domains. Because plotting all 376 words would render the figures illegible, Figure 1 plots the words that have appeared at least 3 times in that domain. These hierarchical clustering plots use correlation as similarity measure and the "complete" clustering algorithm for clustering, in which the closest two objects are determined by the farthest observations between the two objects (Legendre & Legendre, 1998).

The hierarchical clustering figures reveal interesting patterns about people's representations of authenticity. The words that are linked together, especially those that are linked together at high correlation values (the correlation values are shown on the *y* axis), are synonyms that are typically mentioned together. For example, the words "different" and "interesting" are typically mentioned together in the person-authenticity domain; while "different" tends to be mentioned together with "one of a kind" in the brand-authenticity domain. Such information is useful for researchers because when they compile a survey or an experiment about authenticity and consider what words or terms to use, they can expect that these words will yield similar results.

The shapes of the hierarchical clustering graphs also reveal how complex the concept of authenticity is across domains. To identify how many distinct subconcepts of authenticity exist in each domain, I calculated the Duda–Hart
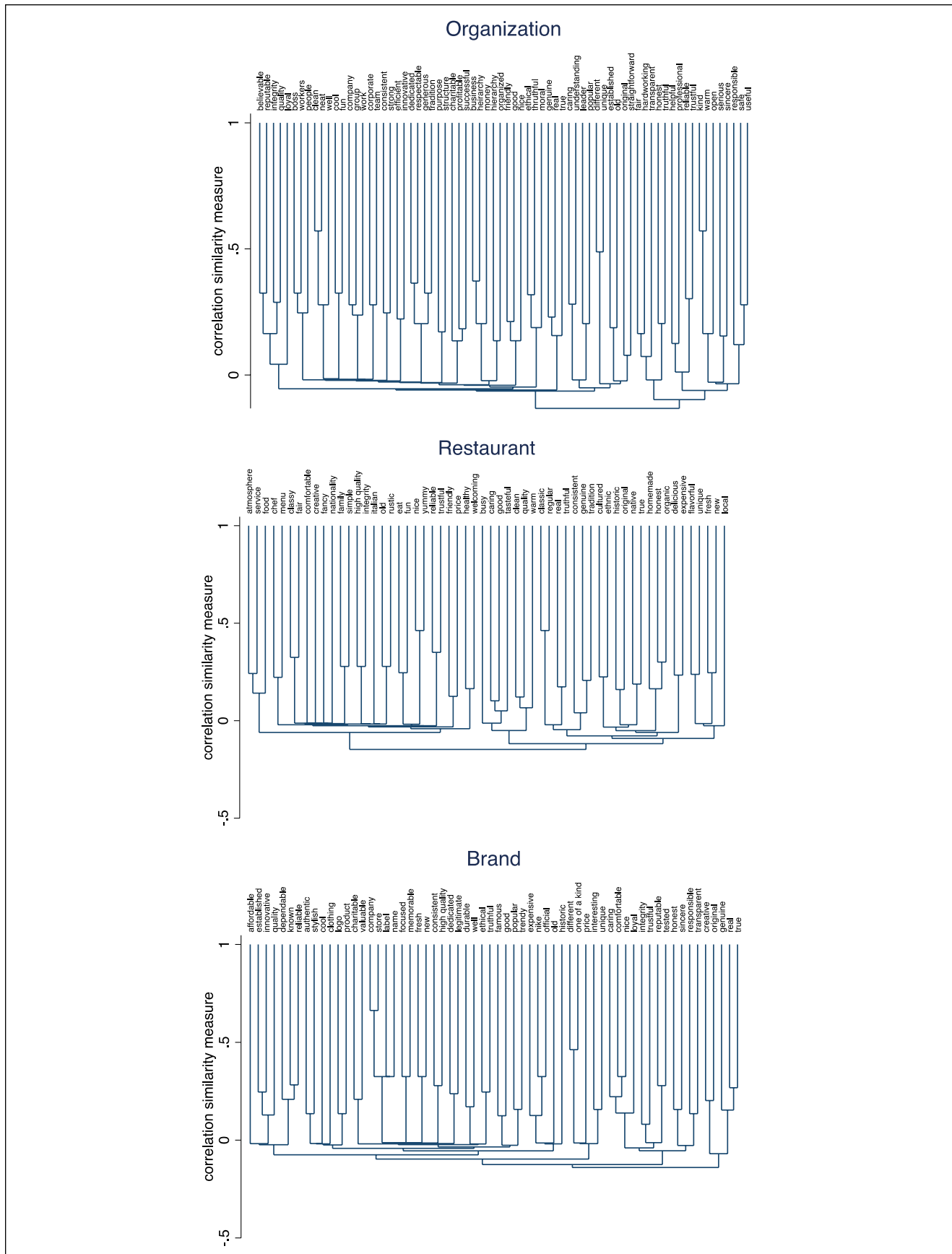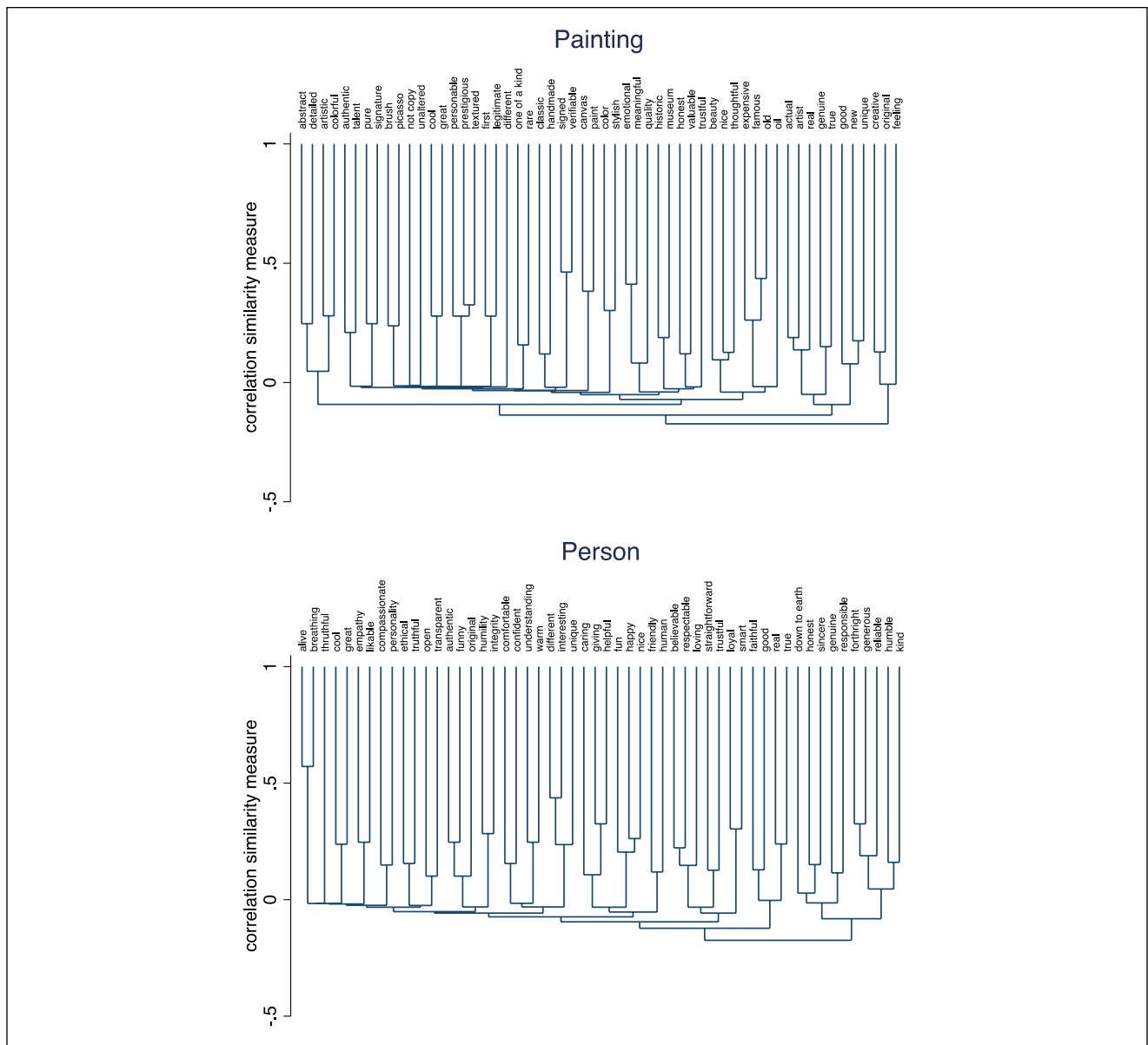
Figure 1. (continued)

Figure 1. Hierarchical clustering of words listed at least 3 times in a given domain.

Note. Clusters linked at higher levels are more internally similar, for example, the correlation between "different" and "one of a kind" [in the center of the figure for brand] is .48.

statistic (Duda, Hart, & Stork, 2012), which is the most commonly used hierarchical clustering optimal cluster count statistic that can also handle cases in which the tree does not need to be split. The statistical literature recommends that the "optimal" number of clusters is determined by looking at solutions that maximize the Je(2)/Je(1) statistic and minimize the pseudo *t*-squared statistics. Table 7 shows the optimal stopping statistics. For each domain, I highlighted in bold the "optimal" solution (with the caveat that interpreting such tables is not an exact science, for example, the method does not specify the trade-off between the Je(2)/Je(1) and the

pseudo *t*-squared statistics—see Duda et al., 2012). The optimal cluster counts vary by domain: the painting and brand domain have six distinct authenticity subconcepts, the organization domain has three subconcepts, the person domain has five subconcepts, while restaurant domain can be either viewed as a unitary concept or as four separate subconcepts (both solutions are "optimal" according to the Duda–Hart statistics). These findings have an important message for researchers of authenticity: Perceptions of authenticity are more multifaceted than what the literature have assumed, and the top-down approaches that rely on only one or a few
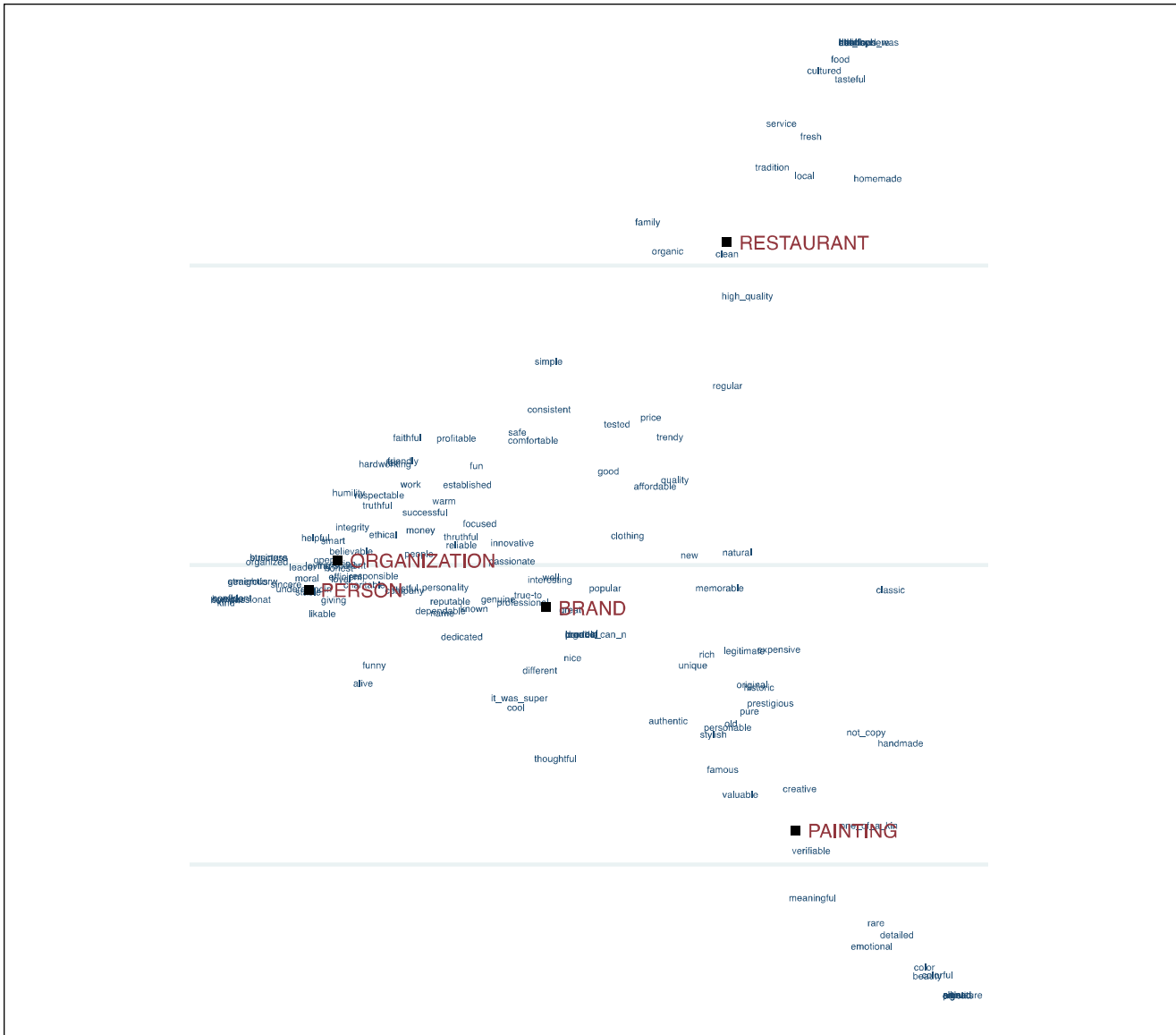
Figure 2. Correspondence analyses.

concepts of authenticity are likely to be oversimplifying audiences' perceptions, especially in the painting, brand, and person domains.

Measuring the Complexity of an Individual's Associations to Authenticity

Earlier in the article, I argued that some people may only use one lens or a narrow definition of authenticity to assess the authenticity in a given domain, while others may use multiple lenses on authenticity or a multifaceted definition of authenticity. Here I demonstrate that the complexity of an individual's associations to authenticity can be measured by considering the average pairwise similarity of the words

she lists as relevant to authenticity. A participant who only lists, in a given domain, one word or a few closely related words (e.g., she lists "cool" and "great" when asked about a person's authenticity) can be considered to have a single lens on authenticity in that given domain. A participant, however, who lists words and concepts that are distant in the conceptual space (e.g., "alive," "believable," and "kind"), exhibits a multifaceted and complex conceptualization of authenticity in that domain. Figure 3 shows the distribution of the average pairwise correlations of words listed per person in a given domain. The higher the average correlation value for a given participant in a given domain (as shown on the *x* axis), the more similar the words are that she listed as relevant for authenticity in that domain. Values

Table 7. Duda–Hart optimal stopping indices for the hierarchical clustering tree of Figure 2.

No. of Clusters	Painting		Restaurant		Brand		Person		Organization	
	Je(2)/Je(1)	Pseudo t Square	Je(2)/Je(1)	Pseudo t Square	Je(2)/Je(1)	Pseudo t Square	Je(2)/Je(1)	Pseudo t-Square	Je(2)/Je(1)	Pseudo t-Square
1	0.9302	4.05	**0.9699**	**1.74**	0.924	4.94	0.9463	2.95	0.9632	2.67
2	0.9486	2.77	0.9448	1.64	0.9647	2.01	0.9344	2.95	0.8814	2.02
3	0.8164	1.35	0.9353	1.45	0.9528	2.13	0.9453	2.2	**0.9709**	**1.59**
4	0.9434	2.58	**0.9252**	**1.29**	0.9348	2.65	0.8541	1.37	0.8361	1.96
5	0.9341	2.75	0.8517	4.53	0.6833	1.39	**0.9454**	**1.79**	0.9231	3.58
6	**0.9484**	**1.74**	0.8445	1.66	**0.95**	**1.63**	0.7672	1.52	0.9472	2.23
7	0.7407	1.05	0.8459	1.28	0.8628	1.59	0.9352	1.59	0.8578	1.33
8	0.9032	2.57	0.8124	1.15	0.9386	1.7	0.7927	1.57	0.9357	2.4
9	0.7782	1.42	0.7968	1.28	0.8051	1.45	0.9147	1.49	0.9389	2.08

Note. The optimal solutions are highlighted with bold typeface.
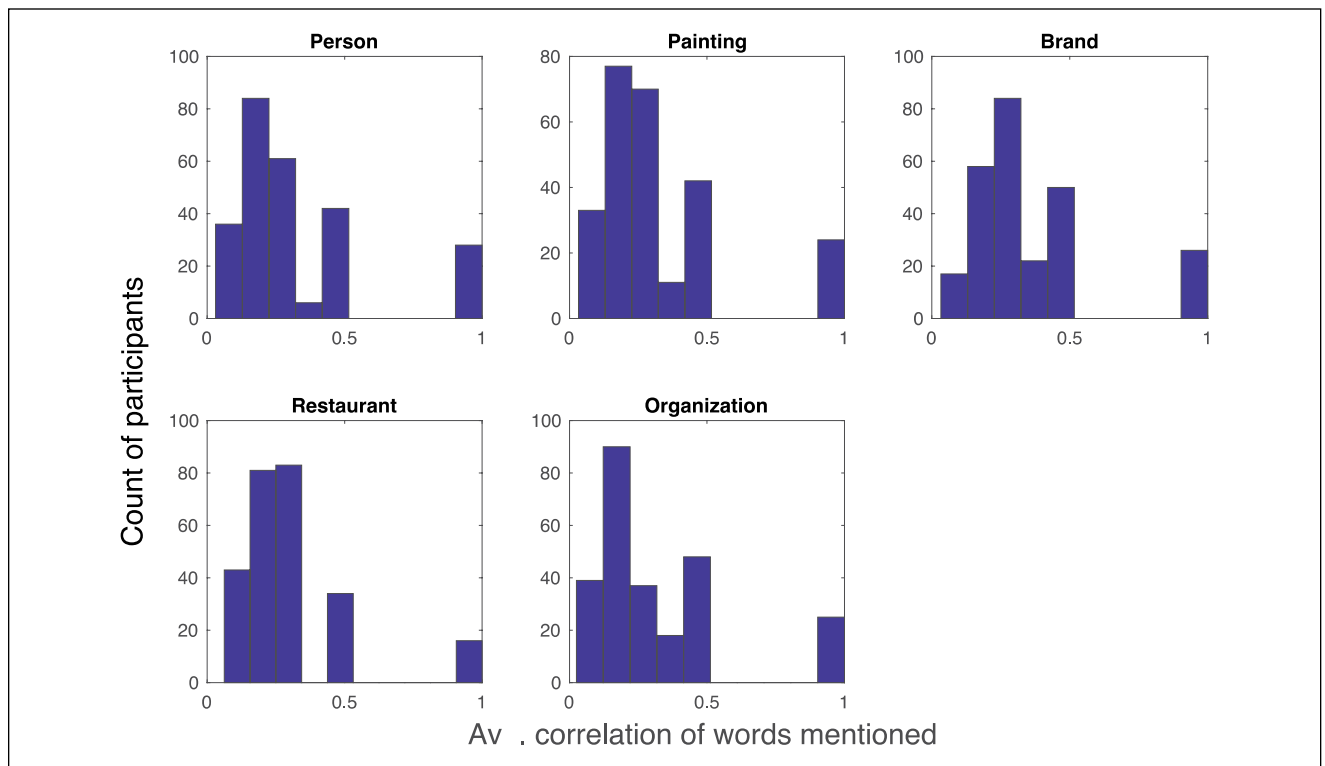

Figure 3. Distribution of average similarity of words mentioned by participants.

of 1 on the *x* axis refer to cases when the participant has listed a single concept for that domain. As the figure shows, there is substantial variance in the complexity of participants' conceptualization of authenticity. About 10% of the sample lists a single word that they think are relevant to authenticity in the domain; many participants only list words that are similar to each other (the ones in the middle of the distribution), but most participants list multiple dissimilar words (the left sides of the distributions). These latter group of participants have a complex conceptualization

of authenticity and apply multiple lenses of authenticity simultaneously.

Next, I explore the extent to which authenticity dimensions are stable within participants, across domains. That is, do participants use the same authenticity lens(es) to describe authentic people, restaurants, brands, and paintings? For this, I calculate the correlation of the words, for each person, across the five domains. Formally, for each participant *i*, I take the cells $L_{i,:,:}$, resulting in a 376-by-5 matrix for each participant, with 0 if the participant did not list a word
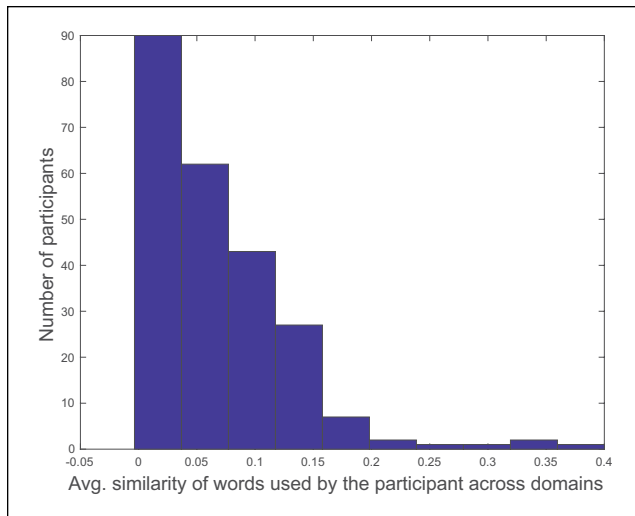
Figure 4. Distribution plot of average similarity of words used by the person across domains.

as relevant for authenticity in that domain, and 1 if she did. Then for each participant, I take the pairwise correlations of the columns of this matrix (i.e., the correlation between the vector for paintings and the vector for restaurants; the vector for brands and the vector for restaurants, etc.), resulting in 5-by-4 = 20 correlation values. Finally, for each participant, I take the mean of these correlation values. Figure 4 shows the distribution of the average correlations. The figure demonstrates that while there are a few participants who may use the same words to describe authenticity across domains (the correlations are in the 0.3–0.4 range), for most participants the across-domain correlations are quite low (<.2), indicating that most participants use different concepts to describe what is authentic in the domain of restaurants, paintings, persons, brands, and organizations.

Finally, I return to the typology of audiences I proposed in Table 2. Figure 5 populates the typology with participants, where each dot on the figure represents a participant, and the location of the dots are calculated based on the participants' answers. The dotted lines represent medians. The information of the complexity of a person's authenticity concept(s) within a domain and her consistency of using the same words to describe authenticity across domains can be represented together in a scatter plot. The quadrants in Figure 5 directly match to the audience typology I laid out in the "A Typology of Audiences' Lay Associations to Authenticity" section. People who listed words that are similar to each other within domain and also across domains (top right quadrant) are the people who have one simple concept (or a few and similar concepts) of authenticity which they apply to all domains (Type 1—24% of the cases). People who listed words that are similar to each other within domains but dissimilar across domains (top-left quadrant) are the people who have multiple concepts of authenticity and they

apply different concepts to different domains but only one concept for any given domain (Type 2—26% of the cases). People who listed words that are dissimilar from each other within domains but similar across domains (bottom-right quadrant) are the people who have a complex concept of authenticity which they apply to all five domains (Type 3—32% of the cases). Finally, people in the bottom left quadrant do not seem to have consistent concepts of authenticity (Type 4—18% of the cases).

The Relative Heterogeneity of Answers Across Participants and Domains

In the "Introduction" section, I suggested two reasons why have authenticity researchers may have produced so many alternative frameworks, definitions, and conceptualizations of authenticity: heterogeneity among people in their lay concepts and associations to authenticity, and heterogeneity of these lay associations to authenticity across domains. While I cannot answer directly this question using the data from the survey, I can investigate the relative strength of across-persons and across-domains variance in the survey answers. To do so, I estimate the predictive power of "individuals" and "domains" on the word mentions. Specifically, I reshape the 257×376×5 term-frequency array to a 1×483,160 vector (where 483,160 = 257×376×5), where each cell is a 0 or 1 depending whether a given person mentioned a given word in a given domain. I then estimate logit models with either participant fixed effects or domain fixed effects. I find that the person fixed effects explain 50% of the variance, while the domain fixed effects explain 8% of the variance. This indicates that there is more across-person heterogeneity than across-domain heterogeneity in word associations to authenticity.

The Ascribed Importance of Authenticity Across Domains and Persons

Next, I analyze the answers to the questions: "How important is it for you that person/organization/brand/restaurant/painting is authentic?" Participant answered these questions on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 = "not at all important" to 5 = "extremely important." First, I compare the average response values across dimensions. The responses reveal that the domain in which authenticity matters by far the most is the authenticity of persons domain ($M = 4.218$, $SD = 1.060$, 95% confidence interval [CI] [4.087, 4.348]). Participants indicate that authenticity is much less important in the other four domains (organizations: $M = 3.549$, $SD = 1.142$, 95% CI = [3.408, 3.688]; brands: $M = 3.428$, $SD = 1.088$, 95% CI [3.294, 3.562]; restaurants: $M = 3.369$, $SD = 1.104$; paintings: $M = 3.211$, $SD = 1.318$, 95% CI [3.234, 3.505]). The fact that authenticity seems to be most important in the person domain
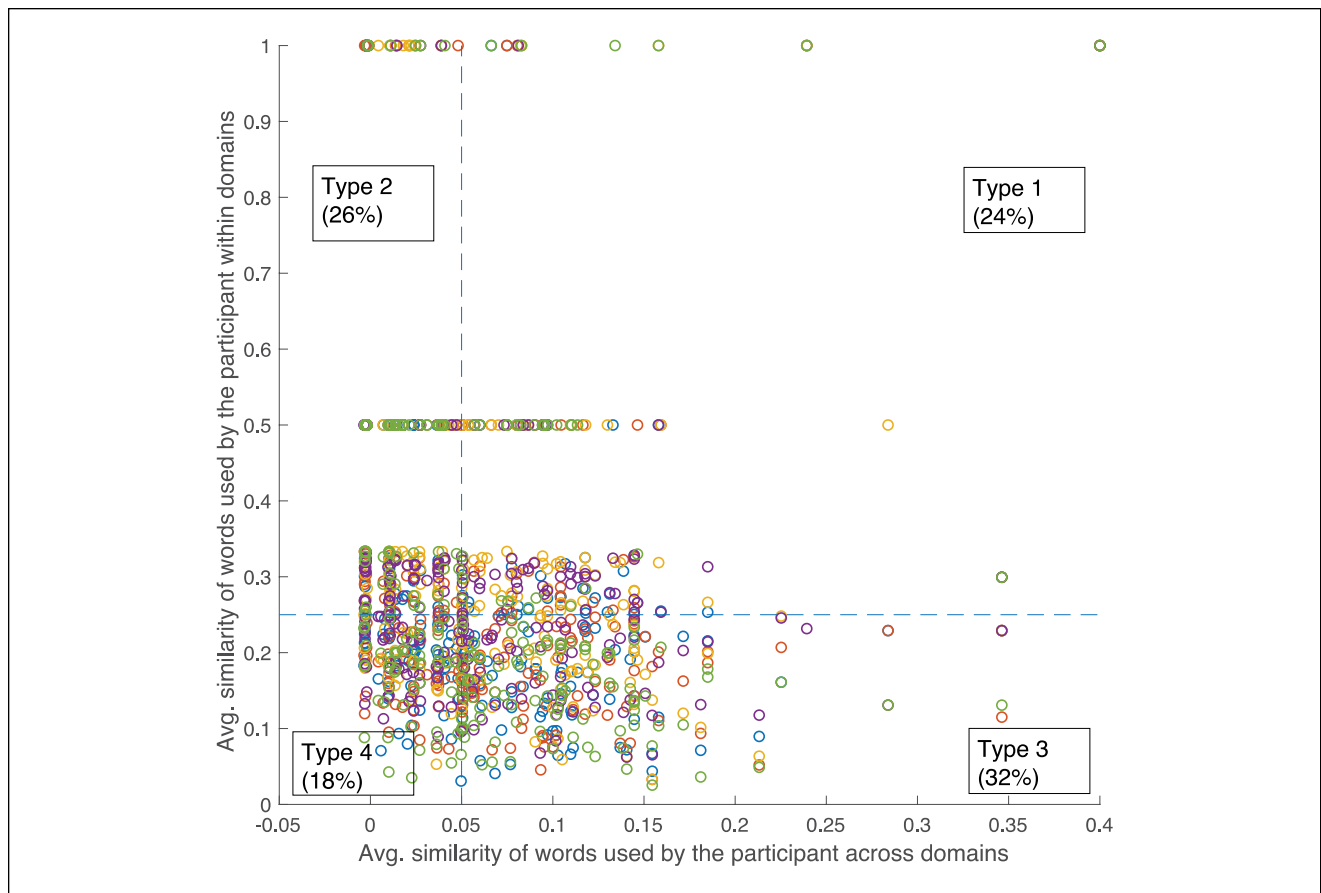
Figure 5. Scatter plot of average similarity of words used by the person across domains (*x* axis) and average similarity of words used by the person within domains (*y* axis).
Note. The dashed lines denote the median values. For easier comparison, I overlaid the audience typology from Table 2. The percentages denote the proportion of answers in that audience type.

may explain why most of the authenticity research in psychology, organizations studies, sociology, and philosophy is conducted around the "what makes a person authentic" question (the review by Lehman et al., 2019, argues that most research papers the authenticity judgment targets are persons). Note, however, that all these means are above 3 (the value for the "moderately important" answer), indicating that participants do care about authenticity in the other domains as well.

Next, I investigate clustering between domains in terms of what domains a given individual finds important. Table 8 shows pairwise correlations of the importance of authenticity for a give domain question, across the five domains, within participants. The table demonstrates relatively low correlations, from the lowest .18 (between the painting and person domains) to the highest .59 (between the brand and organization domains). This indicates that participants differ in terms of the domains in which they care about authenticity. Figure 6 shows a three-dimensional distribution plot for the answers to the questions "How important is it for

you that a person is authentic?" and "How important is it for you that a painting is authentic?" The figure shows that while there is an overall correlation between the answers to the two questions, there are also many off-diagonal values: There are participants who answered that it is extremely important for a person to be authentic but answered that authenticity is less important for paintings. Vice versa, there are participants, although fewer, who stated that it is more important for a painting to be authentic than for a person to be authentic.

Finally, I investigate whether the importance a participant places on authenticity in a given domain is associated with the complexity of her authenticity concept in that domain. I find that the more important authenticity is in each domain for the participant, the more words she will list as relevant to authenticity in that domain and the more varied those words will be ($N = 1,285$, correlation $\beta = 0.097$, $p < .01$). In other words, people who think authenticity is important will have a more complex representation of authenticity (i.e., they are on average located more to the

Table 8. The within-participant correlations of the answer to the question "How important it is for you that a person/brand/restaurant/painting/organization is authentic?"

	Persons	Brands	Paintings	Restaurants
Brands	.4607			
Paintings	.1851	.3757		
Restaurants	.2580	.5282	.4808	
Organizations	.4301	.5934	.3281	.5359

Note. Respondent-level analyses: $N = 257$. All correlations are significant at $p < .01$.

left on the *x* axis of Figure 5). This finding may pose a paradox to firms who want to pursue authenticity-based marketing to these customer segments: While these audience segments are likely to be the ones where authenticity-based marketing may work the most, these are also the segments where the authenticity perceptions are hardest to assess and please. This finding may also pose some complications to researchers who want to experimentally manipulate authenticity: On one hand, authenticity manipulations are likely to have the strongest effect on participants who care about authenticity, but on the other hand these will be the participants who have complex representations of authenticity and therefore for whom a simple manipulation may not move the whole authenticity construct.

Demographic Correlates of Lay Associations to Authenticity

In additional analyses, I explored whether the answers provided by participants are significantly associated with their demographic characteristics. I explored whether participants' age, gender, or education level influences whether they use the same or similar words to judge authenticity across the five domains; whether they use a few or many conceptual lenses to describe authenticity in each domain; and whether they think authenticity is important for brands, restaurants, persons, paintings, or organizations. I note that I had no previous hypotheses regarding the expected pattern, and the following results should be viewed as exploratory and correlational.

Regarding gender effects, I found that female participants are more likely to use the same concepts to describe authenticity across domains (the average correlation of words across domains is .077 for female participants and .056 for male participants, significantly different at $p < .01$ according to a *t* test). In other words, they are located higher on the *y* axis of Figure 5. Female participants, however, do not differ significantly from male participants in the breadth of concepts used for any of the five domains ($N = 257$, *p* values for *t*-test comparisons between genders, broken down by domains: Person: $p = .18$; Painting: $p = .38$; Brand:

$p = .51$; Restaurant: $p = .52$; Organizations: $p = .29$). I found that overall, across the five domains, women did not indicate that authenticity matters more to them (the mean value for female participants was 3.63 and the mean for male participants was 3.51, $p = .14$ according to a *t* test, $N = 257$).

I found no age effects (linear regressions, linear estimate on average correlation across domain: $\beta = .001$, $p = .812$; linear estimate on mean average similarity within domain: $\beta = -.001$, $p = .958$; linear estimate on average importance of authenticity across domains: $\beta = -.034$, $p = .581$).

Regarding education level, I found that participants with a graduate degree tend to use fewer (word count of participants with graduate degree = 13.18; without graduate degree = 14.56; significantly different according to a *t* test, $N = 257$, $p = .02$) and more consistent set of concepts to describe authenticity (average similarity of words by participants with graduate degree = 0.41; without graduate degree = 0.32; significantly different according to a *t* test, $N = 257$, $p < .01$). These patterns, taken together, suggest that people with a graduate degree have a simpler or more focused conceptions of authenticity. That is, they are on average located more to the right on the *x* axis of Figure 5. Finally, I found that education level does not influence significantly how important participants report authenticity is (if comparing graduate vs. nongraduate degree: *t* test, $p = .745$; for all educational categories: ANOVA, $p = .867$).

Implications for Research and Practice on Authenticity

Below I discuss possible implications of the above findings for some of the literatures that use the concept of authenticity. This list and discussion are not meant to be exhaustive nor definitive; rather, the goal is to call attention to some possibilities which researchers in their respective fields can take further as they develop their work.

Different Meanings of Authenticity and Judging the Self

Differences in lay meanings of authenticity may influence people's self-perceptions: whether they think of themselves as authentic persons. The psychology literature has investigated when and how people judge themselves as authentic, almost exclusively assuming the moral/consistency meaning of authenticity, that is, that people are honest and true to themselves (Newman, Bloom, & Knobe, 2014; Schlegel et al., 2009). As an overall picture, this is in line with my survey results. Yet, as the survey demonstrated above, some people may not only use consistency as the criterion for judging authenticity. For example, uniqueness may also be the lens through which individuals judge others and themselves. A few prior researchers have already pointed this
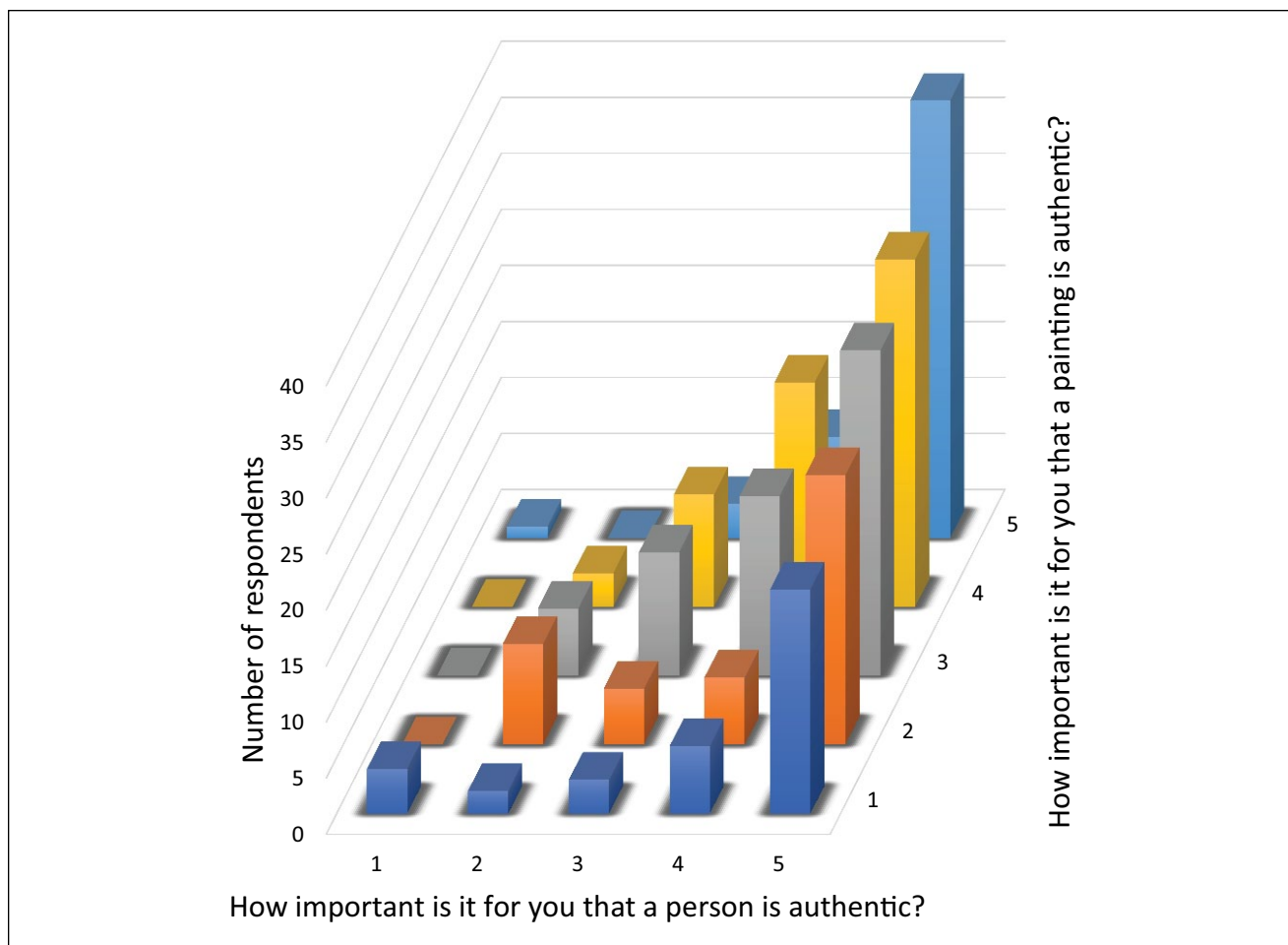
Figure 6. A three-dimensional distribution plot for the answers to the questions "How important is it for you that a person is authentic?" and "How important is it for you that a painting is authentic?"

out. For example, van der Laan and Velthuis (2016) demonstrated that some Dutch teenagers feel authentic if they choose their clothing such that they fit in but also diverge from others and express their own identity. These possibly conflicting goals between consistency and uniqueness, of course, may remind readers of Brewer's (1991) optimal distinctiveness theory. Brewer argued that social identity and group loyalty are the strongest for self-categorization that simultaneously allow a sense of belonging and a sense of distinctiveness. Maybe a similar "optimization" takes place in individuals when they strive to be authentic: They strive to be consistent with their own values and try to stay "true to themselves," but at the same time trying to be unique.

Relatedly, future research could investigate the meaning(s) of authenticity people invoke when describing themselves. Individuals might rely on the most efficient self-enhancement mechanisms at their disposal. If one definition or form of authenticity is unavailable, they may turn to other available options that allow them to paint

themselves in the best light possible. People may choose the applied meanings self-servingly, that is, they will evoke the meaning that puts them in the best light (Newman et al., 2014). Indeed, such a self-serving approach may be behind the variance in the used meanings of authenticity: People will use those lenses to judge others' authenticity that puts their own selves in the best light.

Different Meanings of Authenticity and Authentic Leadership

A related argument may provide new insights for the authentic leadership literature. This literature defines authentic leadership, loosely defined, in terms of the "moral authenticity" (Carroll & Wheaton, 2009) or consistency definition (Lehman et al., 2019) of authenticity, and argue that a leader is authentic if she is true to herself and to the group's values. For example, consider Walumbwa et al.'s (2008) definition:

A pattern of leader behavior that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate to foster greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development. (p. 94)

Multiple pieces of research, indeed, demonstrate that such authentic leadership leads to better performance and trust from "followers" (Neider & Schriesheim, 2011; Walumbwa et al., 2008).

While the survey in my article did not ask about authenticity of leaders specifically, I believe that the answers to the "authenticity of people" and "authenticity or organizations" questions may provide some insights into how the authenticity of leaders may be judged. In line with the authentic leadership research, most of the respondents in my sample listed the moral aspect as the most relevant for authenticity when evaluating people and organizations. But a significant proportion of the respondents also care about values such as uniqueness and originality. This may pose a challenge as some employee may think that the leader is authentic while others may not agree, for example, if the leader does not score high on the uniqueness dimensions. In other words, my results suggest that the authentic leadership literature may better understand the implications of authentic leadership if they take the heterogeneity of audiences' associations to authenticity into account.

Authenticity of Artwork

When asking about the criteria that matters when evaluating the authenticity of paintings, I found that, besides valuing originality, participants also value uniqueness and the artistic and beauty value of the painting. This finding may extend current understanding of authenticity in art. While most researchers on authenticity of paintings focus on their provenance, such as whether a painting is painted by Picasso (Dutton, 2003; Trilling, 1972), recent research by Newman and Bloom (2012) demonstrated that lay evaluators also value uniqueness and physical contact with the original artist. To a large extent, my findings corroborate Newman and Bloom's (2012) results: Lay respondents in my sample associate originality and uniqueness with an authentic painting (95 and 52 mentions, see Table 2). Yet they also associate to a lesser extent aesthetic attributes such as "beauty" (22 mentions) or "colorful" (17 mentions). To my knowledge, "beauty" and "colorfulness" has not been seen as contributing aspects to authenticity. Future research could delve into this issue more, for example, by designing an experiment in which a painting is shown and its colorfulness is manipulated. Such an experiment could test whether laypeople indeed think that more colorful paintings are more authentic.

Distribution of Audience Types, Brands, and Optimal Segmentation Strategy

Imagine that you are the manager of a restaurant and you heard that customers value authenticity. To the extent that you can shape customers' perception of authenticity about your business (Kovács, Carroll, & Lehman, 2017), what aspects of authenticity would you invest in as you develop your business? In another scenario, what if you are a marketer who wants to develop an authentic brand? The findings of this article show that developing an authentic identity for restaurants and brands is hard not only because marketing efforts may backfire but also because customers are highly divided by what they mean by brand authenticity and restaurant authenticity. For brand authenticity, participants mentioned originality, (high) quality, honesty, and uniqueness. For restaurant authenticity, participants mentioned, among others, tastefulness, uniqueness, tradition, quality, freshness, and honesty. Given these wide-ranging criteria, drawing the right balance and focus as a marketer is not obvious. In other words, in these domains marketers and researchers cannot make a simplifying assumption about what audiences care about. Rather, they must come up with approaches to study and possibly manipulate such complex concepts of authenticity.

Quality Versus Authenticity

One notable example where scholarly work and lay associations to authenticity diverge is the issue of quality. The word "quality" (which is a code I created by pulling together answers such as "quality," "high quality," "great quality," and "best quality") is often mentioned by participants to be associated with authenticity, especially in the domain of brands. While some authenticity scholars have associated authenticity with quality (e.g., Arnould & Price, 2000; Beverland & Farrelly, 2009), most researchers have not considered quality to be a defining aspect of a brand's authenticity. For example, Kovács et al. (2014) seeks to empirically show that the two constructs are separate and conclude that "Across the studies, the effects of authenticity on value ratings persist even after controlling for different measures of quality, suggesting that authenticity and quality are distinct constructs" (p. 474). Yet, quality is associated to authenticity in the eyes of my survey participants. This result suggests that future authenticity research may want to consider including quality as a possible dimension when investigating audiences' authenticity perceptions. Of course, a limitation of the current survey is that cannot answer whether participants see high quality as a defining feature of an authenticity or as a corollary of authenticity—this remains a question for future research.

Discussion and Directions for Future Research

In this article, I argued that to understand the effects of authenticity on the behavior of people, organizations, and markets, one needs to understand what lay associations to authenticity the relevant audiences hold. I parted from most prior approaches to authenticity that start with defining what authenticity is and then see if audiences value that. Instead, I conducted a bottom-up survey in which participant answered open-ended questions about what they mean by authenticity in the domains of brands, persons, restaurants, paintings, and organizations.

The answers revealed a rich set of words participants associate with authenticity. After cleaning the data for misspellings and close duplicates, I employed computational linguistics techniques to analyze the verbal answers. While there exists some consistency in people's lay associations to authenticity across domains, I find that participants in general switch the relevant authenticity lenses depending on whether they are evaluating people, brands, paintings, or restaurants. For example, most respondents to my survey hold that morality is a core part of authenticity when evaluating other people, but it is a less relevant criterion of authenticity when evaluating restaurants. Moreover, I found high consensus among participants regarding the words they use to describe authenticity of people ("honest") and paintings ("original"), but much less consensus in the domains of restaurants, brands, and organizations. I demonstrated that there is substantial heterogeneity among participants in the words they associate to authenticity—controlling for participant fixed effects explain half of the variance in word mentions in the data. Finally, I showed that participants do vary in how complex their authenticity concepts are, and participants may even vary in the extent to which they use simple or complex lenses of authenticity when describing the authenticity of restaurants, paintings, persons, brands, and organizations.

The survey results may give reasons for authenticity scholars to re-evaluate existing research in authenticity. I started the article by asserting that one reason so many different theories and frameworks of authenticity have been put forward by scholars could be a significant amount of heterogeneity in audiences' associations to authenticity, both within and across domains. The results of the survey have confirmed that such heterogeneities indeed exist, and these heterogeneities partly account for the heterogeneity in the scientific literature. For example, the fact that most respondents indicated that morality is part of the authenticity concept when evaluating other people corroborates prior research in psychology, marketing, management, and philosophy that focused on the moral aspects of authenticity. But the survey results also reveal that researchers who exclusively applied the moral meaning may have missed part of the picture, as some of the participants also indicated that "uniqueness" is a relevant dimension. Or, in the domain of paintings, in line with what prior research have argued, originality and uniqueness are important aspects of authenticity, but some participants also mention "colorful," "expensive," and "beautiful"—concepts that have not been defining attributes of the authenticity of artworks. Considering these findings, I can envision future research that incorporates these aspects of authenticity.

One may argue that the study's participants, according to the words they list, such as "brush" (4), "rich" (5), "chef" (6), "oil" (6), or "name" (5) [the numbers refer to the count of times these words are listed, see the appendix], seem to know very little about authenticity and therefore authenticity scholars should not really worry about what these participants think. Such an approach would be misguided. These answers could be honest answers, and maybe these participants indeed think that these words are associated to authenticity. Some people may think that oil paintings are more authentic (than paintings made with other techniques), restaurants with a chef are more authentic, and "name" brands are more authentic. One may say that these customers "have no idea about authenticity," but that this attitude would miss the point that in certain cases it is the audience perception that really matters, not a scholarly definition. That is, if a customer does not find a restaurant authentic because it does not have a lead chef, he will likely to give a lower rating on Tripadvisor, even if authenticity scholars do not think that this should matter for authenticity.

One of the major findings emerging from the survey is that audiences have a markedly different concept of authenticity when evaluating the authenticity of people and organizations versus when evaluating brands, paintings, or restaurants. In the former domains, morality plays an important role while in the latter domains, morality plays a less important role. Although this finding may not come as a surprise to the reader, it may reflect a natural divide in the literatures studying authenticity. Recent work has remarked that research on authenticity is somewhat disjointed with different disciplines focusing on different conceptualizations, not resulting in a cumulative research program (Kolar & Zabkar, 2010; Lehman et al., 2019). The findings regarding the divide between the lay authenticity concepts for person versus nonperson domains may explain the divide in the literature, and would make moot a stronger integration between the streams of literatures: If audiences use a different concept of authenticity in different domains then it is less important to strive for combining the literatures. This finding also points to scope conditions about how much the findings in one domain are generalizable to other domains: Because audiences care about different aspects of authenticity in different domains, generalizability across different domains may not work.

A somewhat surprising finding of the study is that the concepts participants associate with authentic organizations are highly similar to the concepts they associate with authentic people. That is, participants use words such as "honest" and "trustful" to describe authentic organizations (see Tables 3 and 4 and Figure 2). This indicates that participants are anthropomorphizing organizations. Somewhat modifying this conclusion, also note that the authenticity concepts regarding restaurants are quite different and evoke words that are not part of authenticity concept of organizations such as "tradition," "local," and "homemade." This may be because the restaurant domain is very concrete to participants and thus the concepts applied to them overwrite the concepts they use for the higher level abstraction of organizations. But this is just a speculation on my side, and I urge researchers of organizational authenticity to explore participants' authenticity concepts for other types of organizations, such as banks, schools, or car dealerships.

In general, while the study documented systematic differences across domains in the authenticity concepts they evoke, it is less clear what drives these differences. What is it about the person domain that invokes morality, and why is morality less related to the authenticity of brands? One may come up with reasonable propositions, such as how "alive" the judgment target is—but such propositions would need to be tested by further research. Such explorations may also help in generalizing the current findings: While I have shown the systematic differences across the domains of persons, paintings, organizations, brands, and restaurants, we have no metatheory to predict what to expect in domains such as music.

There is a possible interpretation of the findings that I would like to recommend strongly against, and that is taking these findings as definitive justification to examine a sole type of authenticity in a domain, say, verifiability for paintings. Even though my findings show that, for example, typicality is not so important for paintings, I would not like readers to conclude that one can and should ignore typicality in the domain of paintings. If this aspect appears, it could be even more important! Moreover, the authenticity association may vary across time as well as domain, and researchers should be open to embracing such possibilities.

Of course, this article is not without limitations. To name a few, the survey was conducted on Amazon Mechanical Turk, and even though the MTurk participant pool is more representative of the general U.S. population than most other subject pools (Paolacci & Chandler, 2014), one may wonder the extent to which it reaches populations that care about authenticity. Experts or enthusiasts may also differ from MTurk workers in their evaluations. Furthermore, the survey asked participants to express their concepts of authenticity. Such task requires that authenticity preferences can be accessed in cognitive and conscious ways. It may be the case that less conscious processes may also influence authenticity judgments. Relatedly, the survey asked participants hypothetical questions—future research will have to investigate whether similar patterns emerge in decision situations that are more natural and tangible for participants. For example, one could observe actual choices among restaurants or choices among brands. Another possible limitation is that, because of the design of the interface, participants could list maximum five words/expressions in each domain. Due to this truncation, the complexity of some participant's concept of authenticity may be underestimated—although I do not think that this is a huge problem because only 7% of all participants used up all the five slots.

Another limitation is that the survey asked participants about what words they associate with authenticity, but word associations do not necessarily reflect defining features. For example, it is not clear whether an association between authenticity and quality in the brand domain means that having high quality increases the perceived authenticity of a brand or that authentic brands tend to be high quality. Future research could investigate causality in multiple ways. One could ask participants about definitions, or ask them "what makes a brand authentic." Alternatively, one could design reverse probes, and ask participants questions such as "what do you associate with high quality" and analyze the extent to which respondents mention authenticity: If respondents often mention authenticity, then high quality is a defining feature of authenticity. If not, it is a correlate. Such a design would also allow for disentangling authenticity from related concepts such as "beauty" or "quality." By rerunning the same survey as proposed in this article but instead of asking about authenticity, one could ask participants about related concepts such as "beauty" or "quality," and then identify the words that are only associated with authenticity but not with beauty or quality.

Another limitation of the survey is that it maps lay word associations to authenticity, and words' associations may be only a limited proxy to the lay theories of authenticity participants may hold. Theories are a set of beliefs, principles, or hypotheses that describe and explain a phenomenon. Lay theories are essentially common sense explanations, beliefs or principles for a phenomenon or social behavior (Furnham, 1988). Therefore, identifying what words people equate with authenticity does not rise to a lay theory about authenticity, because making a word association does not represent an explanation for a social behavior. Therefore, to get closer to understanding the lay theories of authenticity people may have, future research should probe into the explanations people have about authenticity-related social behavior (such as, asking people "Do you think most customers value authentic restaurants? Why do you think so?").

Yet another potential issue with the survey design could be a demand effect such that participants, when asked about multiple domains consecutively, may expect that they "should" answer the questions differently. Such an effect, if present, could bias the results such that the across-domain similarity of the answers would be underestimated. While such an effect may operate, given the large differences across the person, painting, restaurant, and painting domains, I do not think that such an effect would explain the observed patterns.

Future research should also explore the possible drivers of the divergence in meanings of authenticity individuals use. Prior research has explored a few ideas along this line, and researchers have demonstrated that authenticity judgments are influenced by the expertise and expectations of audiences (Belk & Costa, 1998), or their goals (Beverland & Farrelly, 2009). While these are important steps, many open questions remain. For example, one could explore how the lay meanings of authenticity evoked by the individuals relate to their personality types. Also, as norms and values show sizable variance across geographical locations (Suh, Diener, Oishi, & Triandis, 1998), I expect that there will be systematic geographic or cultural differences in lay meanings of authenticity as well. Future research could conduct cross-cultural studies on individual meanings of authenticity. Such an endeavor may not only help authenticity researchers to understand the variety of concepts used by people but, at a practical level, could help marketers to use the right authenticity strategies to target their audiences (Kolar & Zabkar, 2010).

Finally, the survey I conducted has been silent about the "construction" part of the social construction of authenticity. I treated audiences as passive and atomistic observers, and I ignored possible audience dynamics of authenticity. Others have argued that the meanings of authenticity are negotiated in the society (e.g., Carroll & Wheaton, 2009) and are co-constructed by audiences, friends, and networks. There is no empirical work to my knowledge that investigates how such active co-construction happens.

This article has just scratched the surface of possible research questions regarding audience composition and lay associations to authenticity. A more careful empirical investigation of lay associations to authenticity is needed, across more domains, along with more detailed questions about personality types and cultures. In the end, if researchers want to understand whether, when, and how people value authenticity, they must first understand what people mean by authenticity.

Appendix. Words and expressions mentioned at least 3 times in the survey responses.

honest	273	new	14	company	7	classy	4	heap	3
original	209	warm	14	durable	7	clear	4	competent	3
real	163	authentic	13	ethnic	7	committed	4	credible	3
unique	132	charitable	13	faithful	7	community	4	customer-oriented	3
genuine	109	color	13	focused	7	corporate	4	design	3
trustful	107	confident	13	funny	7	eat	4	distinctive	3
quality	102	respectable	13	giving	7	exciting	4	down to earth	3
true	76	believable	12	high quality	7	fancy	4	empathy	3
good	58	great	12	homemade	7	feeling	4	experience	3
loyal	52	interesting	12	likable	7	fine	4	familiar	3
nice	45	money	12	reputable	7	first	4	fashionable	3
sincere	45	moral	12	safe	7	forthright	4	flavorful	3
caring	44	one of a kind	12	simple	7	goal	4	forward	3
expensive	43	truthful	12	structure	7	happy	4	grounded	3
kind	43	well	12	thoughtful	7	hierarchy	4	group	3
transparent	43	established	11	understanding	7	intelligent	4	hierarchy	3
tasteful	42	legitimate	11	chef	6	refined	4	individual	3
reliable	38	local	11	clothing	6	italian	4	intense	3
friendly	37	organized	11	detailed	6	modern	4	label	3
fresh	35	comfortable	10	family	6	nationality	4	large	3
tradition	34	dedicated	10	generous	6	neat	4	limited	3
creative	32	healthy	10	known	6	official	4	living	3
food	31	price	10	natural	6	picasso	4	location	3
old	29	straightforward	10	oil	6	pleasant	4	menu	3
clean	27	business	9	prestigious	6	purpose	4	museum	3
responsible	27	dependable	9	pure	6	serious	4	native	3
integrity	26	handmade	9	regular	6	small	4	nike	3

Appendix . (continued)

open	26	human	9	signed	6	store	4	only	3
artistic	25	innovative	9	tested	6	strong	4	orderly	3
truthful	25	meaningful	9	trendy	6	talent	4	organization	3
beauty	23	smart	9	work	6	team	4	outgoing	3
delicious	23	affordable	8	alive	5	textured	4	perfect	3
ethical	22	artist	8	hardworking	5	time	4	principled	3
valuable	22	compassionate	8	humility	5	typical	4	resourceful	3
different	21	efficient	8	logo	5	upfront	4	rustic	3
cultured	20	emotional	8	memorable	5	useful	4	selfless	3
service	20	famous	8	name	5	welcoming	4	skilled	3
stylish	19	leader	8	not copy	5	abstract	3	sophisticated	3
colorful	18	organic	8	passionate	5	active	3	special	3
fun	18	paint	8	rare	5	aged	3	specific	3
historic	18	people	8	rich	5	amiability	3	supportive	3
loving	17	personable	8	signature	5	attractive	3	sweet	3
classic	15	personality	8	stable	5	available	3	timeless	3
consistent	15	product	8	verifiable	5	bold	3	unaltered	3
cool	15	professional	8	accurate	4	bona fide	3	unchanged	3
fair	15	profitable	8	actual	4	boss	3	valid	3
popular	15	successful	8	awesome	4	brand	3	workers	3
helpful	14	atmosphere	7	brush	4	breathing	3	yummy	3
humble	14	canvas	7	busy	4	character	3		

Note. The numbers denote the count of mentions (summed up across the five domains). This list contains the lowercase version of "cleaned" words, that is, after removing close duplicates, plurals, and mis-spellings. The full list of words and the data cleaning script is available from the author upon request.

Notes

1. Throughout the article, I refer to "lay associations to authenticity" to capture participants' responses to my survey. These are contrasted to the "expert definitions and the theories" provided in the scholarly literature.

2. An anonymous reviewer rightfully pointed out that this choice of domains inadvertently manipulated the level of abstraction and/or the level of analysis in the domains selected (Trope & Liberman, 2010). For example, restaurants are more concrete than organizations (4.89 vs. 3 on the concreteness scale developed by Brysbaert, Warriner, & Kuperman, 2014). As the results of this article show, people are responding to "authentic restaurants" and "authentic organizations" differently, and one could expect difference if the study prompts provided more concrete instances of the "people" category, such as listing words associated with an authentic: friend, businessperson, child, chef, partner, athlete, artist, and so on. I agree with this suggestion, and I think that the intersection of authenticity and construal level is a fascinating research topic which would deserve its own research paper.

3. An anonymous reviewer was wondering if participants could have just copy and pasted the answers from one domain to another. This is highly unlikely because the way the survey was administered (see Figure 1), each word had its own separate "cell," and one cannot select all of them at the same time.

4. The code for cleaning the words and removing the duplicates is available at request from the author.

5. In defense of Kovács, Carroll, and Lehman (2014), however, I would like to mention that they included in their keyword list the five words that my participants most commonly mentioned (honest, original, real, unique, genuine—see Table 1 in Kovács et al., 2014), and many other words that get multiple mentions in my survey are also represented in their list with a close synonym (e.g., "true" vs. "truthful").

6. While correlation is the most often used similarity measure in computational linguistics (Manning & Schütze, 1999), one may argue that because of the nature of the data, other measures such as Jaccard similarity is more applicable. As a robustness test, I replicated all the analyses shown here with Jaccard similarities, and I found qualitatively the same results.

7. A note on estimating statistical significance in word-count differences. There are many alternative ways to calculate whether two word-counts are different from each other, for example, *t* tests, Fisher's exact test, χ^2 tests, ANOVA, linear regressions, or permutation test. These tests rest on different distributional assumptions or assumptions about the "riskset" of word mentions. Throughout the article, I will mostly report *t* tests and ANOVA analyses on slices of the $L_{i,j,k}$ discussed above. That is, I assume that each person in each domain could have listed each of the 376 words: If a word is listed by the person, the value is 1, otherwise 0. Comparing two word-counts within a domain, such as the 137 mentions of "honest" versus 46 mentions of "real" relies on a *t* test of 137 ones [the number of people who mentioned honest] and 120 zeros [participants who did not mention it] versus 46 ones and 211 zeros. I experimented with the other tests and I got highly similar significance values throughout. I chose to present the *t* tests because they are better suited to this data structure than the χ^2 and Fisher tests in that they take into account the number of potential mentions. Finally, I note that because the number of words participants could list in each domain was limited to 5, technically the most correct statistical test would be a permutation test. I have run such tests for a few of the tests mention above but the results were highly similar, probably because only a small proportion of participants listed five words, so the truncations would only matter for them. Because *t* tests and ANOVAs are more customary in psychology, I decided to report them.

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