Prior perspectives have suggested that authentic functioning is necessary for individuals’
to experience optimal levels of psychological health (e.g., Maslow, 1968; Rogers, 1961; Deci &
Ryan, 2000). Recently, a multicomponent construct of dispositional authenticity was defined as
the unimpeded operation of one’s core self in one’s daily enterprise (Goldman & Kernis, 2002;
Kernis, 2003). Accordingly, dispositional authenticity is comprised of four interrelated
components (1) awareness (e.g., self-understanding), (2) unbiased processing (e.g., objective self-
evaluation), (3) behavior (e.g., congruence between one’s actions and needs), and (4) relational
orientation (e.g., sincerity in relationship functioning with one’s intimates). Previously, Goldman,
Kernis, Piasecki, Hermann & Foster (2004) found that higher dispositional authenticity scores
were pervasively linked with healthier psychological (e.g., greater life satisfaction), and
interpersonal adjustment (e.g., lower levels of attachment insecurity and cultural estrangement).
The present study sought to examine the interrelationships between dispositional authenticity,
various self characteristics considered to reflect a “stronger sense of self” (e.g., having high self-
esteeem level, a clearly defined self-concept, etc.), and individuals’ functioning within five
commonly enacted social roles (i.e., being a son/daughter, a student, a romantic partner, a friend,
and an employee), to predict their subsequent psychological adjustment. Seventy six participants’
completed several self-report measures at three separate experimental sessions over the course of
approximately one month. Regression analyses revealed that dispositional authenticity, a stronger
sense of self, and role functioning ratings were each significant predictors of subsequent ratings of
psychological adjustment. However, when controlling for the influence of one another, only a
stronger sense of self and healthy role functioning uniquely predicted subsequent psychological
adjustment scores. The findings suggest authenticity influences psychological adjustment
indirectly by its affect on either a stronger sense of self or one’s role experiences.

INDEX WORDS: Authenticity, Self-Esteem, Well-Being, Social Roles, Psychological Well-
Being, Subjective Well-Being, Self-Concept Organization, Self-Concept, Self-Determination, Motivation, Romantic Relationships, Psychological Adjustment, Fragile Self-Esteem, Self-Concept Structure, Secure Self-
Esteem, Role-Identities, Psychological Health
THE INTERRELATED ROLES OF DISPOSITIONAL AUTHENTICITY, SELF-PROCESSES, AND GLOBAL ROLE FUNCTIONING IN AFFECTING PSYCHOLOGICAL ADJUSTMENT

by

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife Meredith for her continuous love, support, and compassion, but mostly for putting up with me during this process!
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First and foremost I’d like to thank Michael Kernis for his unwavering mentorship, support, friendship, and for teaching me that in dreams begin responsibilities. Thanks to Lenny Martin for teaching me the difference between not thinking and thinking about nothing. Also, thanks to Katherine Kipp and Keith Campbell for your support in seeing this project through.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The present study sought to examine how authenticity relates to self-processes (i.e., self-esteem, self-concept organization, and motivation), interpersonal adjustment within commonly enacted social roles, and global psychological adjustment. I begin by providing a historical overview of the construct of authenticity. Next, I describe a multicomponent conceptualization of dispositional authenticity and I present findings obtained with the Authenticity Inventory (Goldman & Kernis, 2001), a self-report measure designed to assess these components. I then discuss the notion of a “stronger sense of self” as it pertains to authentic functioning in individuals’ self-concept and self-esteem, and their motivation. Next, I describe role identities and role functioning as an important component of authentic interpersonal adjustment. Finally, the interrelationships between dispositional authenticity, a stronger sense of self and healthy role functioning are discussed in terms of their implications for each other and for psychological adjustment.
CHAPTER 2

AUTHENTICITY

Historical Overview of Authenticity

“And if by chance I wake at night and I ask you who I am, oh take me to the slaughterhouse I will wait there with the lamb” – Leonard Cohen

“Whatever satisfies the soul is truth” – Walt Whitman

“I prefer to be true to myself, even at the hazard of incurring the ridicule of others, rather than to be false, and to incur my own abhorrence.” – Frederick Douglass

Poets, painters, clergy, scholars, philosophers and scientists have long sought to define who one "really" is. According to Baumeister (1987), concern over distinguishing between private concealment of one’s self from that which was observable in others emerged as an area of interest around the 16th century. Ensuing themes depicting true versus false selves provided a varied range of possibilities for characterizing one’s true self. Determining whether one’s self was in fact true or false ranged from numerous considerations of evaluative referents that included, but were not limited to, one’s faith, piety, heart, or virtue. Although the construct of one’s true self has been conceptualized in diverse ways many historical and contemporary perspectives consider knowledge of one’s self as a meaningful component of one’s true self. For instance, the playwright Anton Chekhov once stated “Man is what he believes.” From this perspective one’s true self is intimately linked with his or her self-knowledge. But, this is not a case for accuracy per se. It is a case for the impact of one’s perceptions, irrespective of accuracy. To further complicate accuracy in conceptualizing one’s true self, early psychological perspectives championed by Freud (1901) affirmed the role of unconscious motives in
psychological functioning. In this view, one’s true self may even be obscured by one’s own neurotically driven self-deceptions.

Subsequently, Third Force psychologists, as exemplified by humanistic psychologists, highlighted the role of one’s true self and authentic experience in illuminating healthy personality adjustment and psychological functioning. Maslow (1968) suggested that authenticity occurs when individuals discover their true inner nature and actualize their inherent potentialities by sufficiently satisfying higher order psychological needs. That is, after gratifying their physiological needs, individuals then turn toward satisfying their “being” or growth-oriented needs. Focusing on one’s growth oriented needs presumably results in fuller knowledge and acceptance of one’s true, or intrinsic nature, furthering one’s path toward self-actualization (Maslow, 1968). In this view, authenticity depends upon knowledge and understanding of one’s needs, coupled with tendencies to actively fulfill them.

Similarly, Rogers (1961) emphasized that authenticity emerges when congruence is achieved between one’s self-concept and immediate experiences. Thus, being one’s true self involves a sense of connectedness between one’s self-knowledge and attendant experiences. Accordingly, authenticity is rooted in one’s self, but not as a static self-representation. Rather, authenticity may be conceptualized as a dynamic process whereby one’s potentials, characteristics, emotions, motivation, and so forth are discovered and explored, accepted, imbued with meaning or purpose, and actualized. When the true self is congruent with experience, one becomes healthier and fully functional. In this view, individuals’ adjustment, both intrapersonally and interpersonally, may be a marker for the presence of authenticity in individuals.
Although much has been written about authenticity historically, very little empirical research has examined it directly. However, some research has focused on establishing what outcomes emerge when false selves are functioning. This research has typically examined behavioral aspects of relatively inauthentic experience. For example, false self behaviors have been examined with respect to such varied topics as self-monitoring (Snyder, 1974), strategic self-presentations (Goffman, 1959; Schlenker, 1980), and voice (Gilligan, 1982; Harter, Waters & Whitesell, 1997). These areas of research share a common orientation in examining circumstances when individuals’ own needs or motives are characteristically incongruent with the prevailing environmental context.

In addition, congruence between one’s core self-aspects and behaviors has been examined in various ways. Self-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985a) has spawned research demonstrating the importance of need satisfaction in examining authenticity (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Rooted in the humanistic tradition, SDT proposed that individuals possess three fundamental needs: autonomy (i.e., choice), competence (i.e., mastery) and relatedness (i.e., connectedness with others). These needs are conceptualized as being most central to one’s core or true self. Therefore, SDT predicts that when these needs are satisfied (as opposed to being thwarted) individuals will experience greater authenticity and healthier adjustment. In support of this contention, Sheldon and Kasser (1998) reported that individuals whose goals were highly concordant (i.e., congruent with their core needs, values, and interests) scored higher on a variety of psychological adjustment indices than did individuals whose goals were less concordant. These indices included self-actualization, positive mood, and vitality.

In longitudinal research, Sheldon and Kasser (1998) found that individuals’ psychological adjustment increased over time when goals were high but not low in self-
concordance. Similarly, Goldman, Kernis, Piasecki, Hermann, and Foster (2003, Study 1) found that individuals’ psychological adjustment, as measured by autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, purpose in life, self-acceptance, and positive relationships, increased to the extent that their goals “reflected who they really are as a person.” Such findings suggest that the immediate and long-term benefits of goal pursuits are enhanced when these goals represent one’s authentic or core self.

Taken together, these findings indicate that authenticity in goal pursuits is linked to psychological adjustment. However, as a distinct personality variable (i.e., independent of goal constructs), authenticity has not received much attention. To fill this gap, Goldman and Kernis (2001) developed the Authenticity Inventory to measure individual differences in authenticity. This inventory is based on a multicomponent conception of authenticity that I now present.

A Multicomponent Conceptualization of Psychological Authenticity

Authenticity has been conceptualized as the unobstructed operation of one’s core or true-self in one’s daily enterprise (Goldman & Kernis, 2002; Kernis, 2003). Specifically, authenticity involves the following discriminable components: (1) awareness, (2) unbiased processing, (3) behavioral action, and (4) relational orientation. The first component, awareness, refers to having maximal knowledge, recognition and trust of one’s motives, feelings, desires, and self-relevant cognitions. It includes, but is not limited to, being aware of one’s strengths, weaknesses, trait characteristics, emotions, and their roles in behavior. An important aspect of this component is that awareness is not reflected in self-concepts wherein inherent polarities are unrecognized or denied (i.e., that have been characterized as internally consistent; see Campbell, 1990). That is, awareness does not simply reflect recognition of one’s self as “introverted.” Rather, awareness represents recognition of existing polarities inherent in one’s self-concept, or,
as Perls put it, being aware of both "figure" and "ground" in one's personality aspects (Perls, Hefferline, & Goodman, 1951). Therefore, awareness involves knowledge and acceptance of one’s multifaceted and potentially contradictory self-aspects (i.e., being both introverted and extraverted), as opposed to rigid acceptance of only those self-aspects deemed internally consistent with one’s overall self-concept.

A second component of authenticity involves the unbiased processing of self-relevant information. Unbiased processing reflects objectivity in assessing one's positive and negative self-aspects, attributes, qualities, and potentials. Stated differently, unbiased processing involves "not denying, distorting, exaggerating, or ignoring private knowledge, internal experiences, and externally based evaluative information" (Kernis, 2003, p. 14). Deviations from objective self-reflections are considered to largely involve ego-defense mechanisms and may therefore be a marker for maladjustment. For instance, Ungerer, Waters, Barnett and Dolby (1997) found that maladaptive or immature defenses that involve greater reality distortion and/or failure to acknowledge and resolve distressing emotions relate to numerous psychological and interpersonal difficulties, including poor marital adjustment. Similarly, Pennebaker (1990) found that individuals who repressed traumatic events experienced lower levels of psychological health than did those who actively wrote about the experiences. Thus, sustained tendencies to process self-relevant information without objectively attending to it is likely to result in diminished psychological health.

A third component of authenticity involves behavior or action. Authenticity reflects acting in accord with one's values, preferences, and needs as opposed to acting merely to please others or to attain rewards or avoid punishments, or acting "falsely." Theoretically, authentic behavior involves behavior that reflects self-determination (i.e., autonomy and choice), as
opposed to controlled behavior that is contingent upon meeting introjected or external goals (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Kernis et. al., 2000). Kernis (2003) suggests that authentic behavior reflects sensitivity to the fit (or lack of) between one's true self, the dictates of the environment, and an awareness of the potential implications of one's behavioral choices. Moreover, authenticity is not reflected in a compulsion to be one's true self, but rather in the free and natural expression of one’s core feelings, motives, and inclinations in the environmental contexts one encounters (cf. Deci & Ryan, 2000).

A fourth component of authenticity involves one’s relational orientation toward close others. That is, relational authenticity involves the extent to which one values and achieves openness and truthfulness in one’s close relationships. Relational authenticity also entails wanting close others to see one’s true self, both the good and bad qualities. Toward that end, an authentic relational orientation involves a selective process of self-disclosure such that others learn who you are (Kernis & Goldman, in press). An authentic relational orientation should therefore foster the development of mutual intimacy and trust (e.g., more secure attachment). In short, relational authenticity means being genuine and not fake in one’s relationships with close others.

**Dispositional Authenticity and Adjustment**

Recent investigations have demonstrated that dispositional authenticity (Goldman & Kernis, 2001) appears to be linked pervasively to greater psychological adjustment and well-being. Goldman and Kernis (2002) found that higher scores in dispositional authenticity related to higher levels of global self-esteem and lower levels of contingent self-esteem (Kernis & Paradise, in preparation). Authenticity was also linked with hedonic benefits, in that higher
authenticity scores were associated with greater subjective well-being, as measured by greater reported levels of life-satisfaction and positive affectivity and lower negative affectivity.

In a longitudinal study examining dispositional authenticity, goal pursuits, and adjustment, Goldman, Kernis, Piasecki, Hermann, and Foster (2003, Study 2), hypothesized that higher authenticity scores would be related to healthier goal pursuits, subjective well-being, psychological well-being, and personality and interpersonal adjustment. Goldman et al. first administered a measure of dispositional authenticity (AUT-II) along with a variety of personality and adjustment measures. In a subsequent phase, participants self-generated a list of goal pursuits in the form of “personal projects” (McGregor & Little, 1998) that they were pursuing at the time. They then rated the 8 most important goals on 31 evaluative dimensions to assess the meaning attributed to one’s goal pursuits. Dimensions were combined to form theoretically meaningful categories to capture aspects of goal pursuits that were congruent with or that fostered authentic experience. Goldman et al. proposed that individuals’ goal pursuits would provide opportunities for competence, self-determination, expressing one’s true self, and positive feelings, especially for individuals who are high in authenticity. These researchers found that higher authenticity scores were related to goal pursuit ratings that reflected greater self-concordance, self-worth benefit, fun, relative importance, efficacy, absorption and lower reported levels of pressure.

With respect to subjective and psychological well-being, Goldman et al. (2003) found that higher authenticity ratings were positively correlated with all six subscales of Ryff’s (1989) multicomponent measure of well-being. Specifically, higher authenticity scores were related to greater autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Furthermore, the pattern of findings concerning subjective
well-being replicated Goldman and Kernis (2002) by linking higher authenticity ratings with greater life-satisfaction and positive affectivity, and less negative affectivity. In addition, authenticity was related to healthier personality and interpersonal adjustment. For instance, authenticity was positively correlated with global self-esteem and a secure attachment style, but negatively related to preoccupied and fearful attachment styles.

Other findings indicated that higher authenticity scores related to less self-enhancement motives for social comparison, self-monitoring, and contingent self-esteem (Goldman et al. 2003). Consequently, greater levels of authenticity seem to reflect a "stronger sense of self" (Kernis, Paradise, Whitaker, Wheatman, & Goldman, 2000). That is, higher authenticity scores were linked with more secure (Kernis & Goldman, 1999; Kernis & Paradise, 2003) forms of self-esteem (high self-esteem level coupled with low contingent self-esteem). In addition, greater authenticity in individuals was related to less dependence on others as a source for self-evaluation (i.e., lower social comparison and contingent self-esteem) and in determining what behaviors one should consider enacting (i.e., low self-monitoring).

Consistent with the notion of authenticity being related to a stronger sense of self, authenticity has also been found to relate to indices of self-organization that affirm efficacy and adaptability in one's self-concept. Specifically, Goldman et al. (2003), found that higher authenticity scores were positively related to the identity integration scale of O'Brien and Epstein’s (1988) multidimensional measure of self-esteem. This finding indicates that higher levels of authenticity are associated with individuals' beliefs that they are efficacious at assimilating new information and directing life experiences.

Similarly, Kernis, Goldman, Piasecki and Brunell (2003) found that authenticity was related to interpersonal behavioral aspects of self-organization, as assessed by Paulhus and
Martin's (1988) measure of functional flexibility. Specifically, participants rated eight trait pairs that were derived from the interpersonal circumplex (Wiggins & Holzmuller, 1978; 1981), and reflected bipolar semantic opposites (e.g., warm and cold). Each trait attribute was evaluated separately on a unidimensional scale assessing the extent to which one feels (1) capable of being ...(e.g., warm) when the situation requires it, (2) difficulty in enacting the behavior, (3) anxiety in performing the behavior, and (4) the tendency to avoid situations demanding such behaviors.

Kernis et al., (2003) found that higher authenticity scores were related to greater functional flexibility. Specifically, participants with higher authenticity scores were more likely to report that they are capable of enacting these interpersonal behaviors, and perceived less difficulty, anxiety, and avoidance of these interpersonal behaviors. Thus, greater dispositional authenticity may perhaps foster unique adaptive benefits in interpersonal functioning. That is, possessing an organized set of self-knowledge for a repertoire of potential interpersonal behaviors can inform one’s decision to enact a particular behavior. Similarly, individuals’ awareness of how much difficulty and anxiety they experience when they enact certain behaviors may enhance their interpersonal adjustment by enabling behavioral choices to be made on well-informed self-knowledge. In sum, authenticity has been pervasively linked with broad indices of interpersonal adjustment, and it appears to involve aspects of self-esteem and self-organization that are characterized by a “stronger sense of self.”
CHAPTER 3
A STRONGER SENSE OF SELF

The following section will review a variety of aspects of psychological functioning that reflect the notion of a “stronger sense of self”. Previously, a stronger sense of self has been conceptualized as being the “master of one’s psychological domain” (Kernis, et al., 2000). Specifically, Kernis et al. (2000) suggest a stronger sense of self involves three components: (1) one’s feelings of self-worth are stable and secure, (2) one’s actions reflect a strong sense of agency and self-determination, and (3) one’s self-concept is clearly and confidently defined so that it contributes to a coherent sense of direction in one’s daily experience.

Building from the conception of a stronger sense of self by Kernis et al. (2000), I propose that healthy functioning involves a stronger sense of self that reflects a combination of processes associated with the content and structure of an individual's self-concept. More specifically, a stronger sense of self involves feelings of self-worth that are characterized by secure high self-esteem (e.g., positive feelings that are relatively non-contingent on matching standards or meeting others approval; Kernis, 2003). Also, when reflecting a stronger sense of self, individuals’ feelings of self-worth are presumed to be relatively similar in various representations of their self-worth. That is, individuals’ feelings of self-worth should be similar whether or not they are thinking about themselves in general or specific interpersonal domains (e.g., romantic partner) that their self-worth may be based on. Furthermore, a stronger sense of self is marked by characteristics of self-concept organization such that individuals (a) possess a clearly and confidently defined sense of self that is internally consistent and temporally stable.
(i.e., self-concept clarity), (b) have clearly defined long-term goals and knowledge of what they want out of life, and an inner sense of cohesion and integration of different aspects of their self-concept (i.e., high levels of self-concept clarity and identity integration), (b) exhibit consistency in the personality traits they perform across different social roles (i.e., low levels of self-concept differentiation), (c) feel capable to enact a wide range of interpersonal behaviors (i.e., high levels of functional flexibility), and (d) are less prone to avoid processing self-relevant information used in the construction, negotiation, and maintenance of their identity (i.e., low levels of a diffuse/avoidant identity style).

Finally, a stronger sense of self involves having healthy motivations that directly satisfy individuals’ core needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (i.e., high levels of self-determination). That is, a stronger sense of self in individuals involves behaviors that are perceived to be caused by internal needs, rather than being attributed to external pressures or demands. Motivation involving a stronger sense of self is personally expressive, and fosters congruence between individuals’ core needs and their experiences.

In short, a stronger sense of self may be construed with respect to the following dimensions (1) self-esteem, (2) self-concept organization, and (3) motivation. When individuals’ self-concepts are characterized by a stronger sense of self, high levels of psychological adjustment and authentic functioning should be occurring. Each of the dimensions characterizing a stronger sense of self will be described below after I elaborate on some theoretical aspects of the self-concept and self-esteem.

The Contents and Organization of the Self-Concept

The content and organization of one’s self-knowledge (i.e., self-concept) has important implications for authenticity by providing the informational referents by which self-evaluation
and behavioral choices may be made. In characterizing the self-concept, a major distinction has been made between the contents and the structure (i.e., organization) of individuals' self-knowledge. Whereas contents refer to specific knowledge of self-relevant beliefs (e.g., attributes) and their value or importance, self-structure refers to how the elements or contents are cognitively organized into categories (Showers, 2002).

The content of one’s self-concept reflects diverse elements of self-knowledge that include but are not limited to psychological traits, physical characteristic, values, personal goals, and social roles (Campbell, Trapnell, Heine, Katz, Lavallee, & Lehman, 1996). In addition, self-knowledge contents involve evaluative components of specific domains that vary in their degree of generality (Kernis & Goldman, 2002). For instance, self-evaluations may be conceptualized as the degree that individuals’ possess positive or negative evaluations on specific dimensions such as physical attractiveness or intelligence (e.g., Harter, 1985). Alternatively, self-esteem is conceptualized as a global self-evaluation reflecting how positively individuals’ generally feel about their self-worth (Rosenberg, 1965). In short, the contents of the self-concept refer to the specific self-beliefs (i.e., "Who am I?") and self-evaluations (i.e., "How do I feel about myself?") individuals have about themselves. Self-organization, however, refers to qualities concerning how the contents of individuals' self-concepts are structured or organized (i.e., "How do my self-contents fit together?"). Thus, the current view of the contents of one’s self-concept seems in line with James (1890) notion of the "Me" self-aspect in representing the elements of the self-concept that reflect the aggregate knowledge of things known about the self. In contrast, self-organization seems relevant to James notion of the “I” aspect of one’s self, that reflects the knower, or active agent responsible for interpreting one’s experiences and therefore functions as the constructor of the Me (i.e., “self-concept”).
Self-Esteem

How individuals feel about themselves has been implicated in broad aspects of psychological functioning and well-being (Kernis & Washull, 1995; Kernis & Goldman, 1999). For instance, high self-esteem levels or highly favorable global feelings of self-worth (a characteristic presumed to reflect a stronger sense of self and authenticity) has been linked with greater subjective well-being (Myers & Diener, 1995) and self-confidence (O’Brian & Epstein, 1988). In fact, Diener (1984) concluded that high self-esteem was the strongest predictor of life-satisfaction, outperforming a wide variety of demographic and objective outcomes, including physical health, income, and marital status.

Despite findings that link self-esteem to adjustment, researchers have cautioned that self-esteem level and high self-esteem itself may be theorized as heterogeneous constructs that reflect diverse components (Kernis & Goldman, in press; Crocker & Wolfe, 2001. Consistent with this line of reasoning, Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger and Vohs (2003) recently examined the research literature to assess the importance of self-esteem to a multitude of outcomes, including diverse aspects of performance, interpersonal success, happiness, and lifestyle. The researchers concluded that with the exception of a link to happiness, most of the effects of self-esteem were weak to modest. Thus, if self-esteem is a heterogeneous construct it may not serve as a reliable predictor of meaningful aspects of psychological functioning. As such, a stronger sense of self involves a unique configuration of various dimensions of self-esteem that may impact adjustment more directly than self-esteem level does.

Fragile and Secure Self-Esteem

Kernis and colleagues have theorized that high self-esteem may be differentiated into fragile or secure forms (Kernis & Goldman, 2003; Kernis & Paradise, 2002; Kernis & Goldman,
in press). Individuals with fragile high self-esteem are characterized by possessing positive feelings of self-worth that are vulnerable to threats. As such, individuals with fragile self-esteem reflect chronic investments to defend and promote their positive feelings by relying upon self-enhancing and self-protective strategies (Kernis, 2003). Alternatively, individuals with secure high self-esteem are thought to “like, value, and accept themselves, imperfections and all” (Kernis, 2003, p. 3). Individuals with secure self-esteem have little need to engage in self-protective or self-promoting strategies to maintain positive feelings of self-worth because such feelings are well intact. Thus, high self-esteem that is secure is thought to promote more adaptive functioning than its fragile counterpart. Distinctions among fragile and secure forms of self-esteem have been conceptualized with regard to a variety of dimensions, including the stability and contingency of self-esteem.

**Stability of self-esteem.** Stability of self-esteem refers to the extent that contextually based feelings of self-worth fluctuate (e.g., Kernis & Goldman, 1999). Fragile high self-esteem is theorized to reflect positive feelings of self-worth that exhibit greater instability than those with secure high self-esteem (e.g., Kernis & Goldman, 2002). Therefore, individuals with fragile high self-esteem may be more prone to experiencing negative affect than secure high self-esteem individuals. Consistent with this line of reasoning, Kernis, Grannemann and Barclay (1989) hypothesized that individuals with high unstable self-esteem (i.e., fragile) would experience heightened amounts of anger and hostility. Self-esteem instability was assessed within individuals as the standard deviation of eight state self-esteem ratings completed by participants during a five-day span. The researchers' found that individuals with high unstable self-esteem scored highest on inventories of anger and hostility, whereas individuals with high stable self-esteem scored the lowest. Individuals with low stable or low unstable self-esteem scored between
the two extremes. Thus, heightened levels of anger and hostility were most indicative of those with fragile high self-esteem (i.e., high and unstable feelings of self-worth).

Self-esteem instability has also been linked with lower levels of psychological adjustment. Kernis and Paradise (2002) had participants’ complete measures to assess stability of self-esteem, level of self-esteem, and Ryf’s (1989) measure of psychological well-being. They found that compared to individuals with high stable self-esteem, individuals with high unstable self-esteem reported lower autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, self-acceptance, and positive relations with others. Thus, individuals with fragile high self-esteem (e.g., high unstable self-esteem) appear to reflect less adaptive psychological functioning than those with secure high self-esteem (e.g., high stable self-esteem).

*Contingent self-esteem.* Another distinction between fragile and secure forms of self-esteem has been made with respect to how contingent individuals’ self-esteem is. Deci and Ryan (1995) described contingent self-esteem as “feelings about oneself that result from- indeed, are dependent on- matching some standard of excellence or living up to some interpersonal or intrapsychic expectations” (p. 32). When individuals possess self-esteem that is high and contingent, their self-esteem may be particularly fragile. That is, their positive self-feelings are sustained only if they successfully satisfy relevant criteria. Contingencies of self-esteem are presumed to undermine individuals’ psychological adjustment to the extent that individuals may not be able to successfully perform to the evaluative standards they measure their self-worth by. Alternatively, high self-esteem that is relatively non-contingent is thought to reflect true feelings of self-worth that are well anchored and secure, and do not depend upon the attainment of specific outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 1995; Kernis & Goldman, 2002). This form of secure high self-esteem is presumed to develop when individuals actions are self-determined and congruent with
core self aspects, rather than emerging from chronic evaluations of their performance relative to externally based or internally imposed expectancies (Kernis, 2003).

Research examining the effects of contingent self-esteem on psychological functioning has found support for the contention that greater contingent self-esteem levels undermine psychological adjustment. One way that contingent self-esteem has been examined is by assessing various domains or categories that individuals have staked their self-esteem upon. Crocker and Wolfe (2001) theorized that individuals differ in the specific domains of contingencies they feel they must satisfy in order to maintain feelings of self-worth. Domains reflecting high amounts of contingency of self-worth are presumed to exert a greater impact on psychological adjustment than less contingent domains because individuals' feelings of worthiness depends upon the outcomes experienced in those domains.

To test the impact of specific contingencies of self-worth on psychological functioning, Crocker, Luhtanen, and Bouverette (2001) developed the Contingencies of Self-Worth Scale (CSW). The CSW assesses the extent that individuals' feelings of self-worth depend upon the following seven domains: appearance, others' approval, outdoing others in competition, academic competency, love and support from family, virtue, and God's love. Research using the CSW has found that in general, the greater the degree of contingency of self-esteem within a particular domain, the less individuals experience healthy psychological adjustment. For instance, Crocker (2002) reported that among first-year college students the contingencies of social approval and physical attractiveness were predictive of depressive symptoms.

However, the impact of contingencies on healthy psychological adjustment may reflect a match between the specific type of contingency and particular life events individuals experience. For instance, Crocker, Sommers, & Luhtanen (2002) examined college seniors applying to
graduate school and the impact that receiving acceptance or rejection letters had on their feelings of self-worth. Participants first completed the CSW. Then, for a period of two months, they accessed a Web page twice a week (and when they received acceptance or rejection letters from a graduate program), to complete a state measure of Rosenberg's self-esteem scale.

Crocker et al. (2002) found that increases and decreases in state self-esteem were a function of the degree that individuals’ self-esteem was contingent on their academic competence and the type of news they received from the graduate program. Specifically, the more individuals’ self-esteem was based on academic competency the more their self-esteem increased on acceptance days and decreased on rejection days, relative to days on which they received no news. Furthermore, the changes in students state self-esteem after having received their letters was only moderated by their scores on the academic competency subscale, and none of the other contingency subscales. Thus, it appears that specific outcomes in domains on which individuals base their self-worth are likely to meaningfully impact their psychological functioning.

The effect of contingent self-esteem on psychological functioning has also been examined with respect to global feelings of contingent self-worth, as opposed to specific domains of contingencies. Kernis and Paradise (2003) examined the role of contingent self-esteem in predicting the intensity of anger aroused by an ego-threat. Participants were undergraduate women who were first administered global measures assessing contingent self-esteem (the Contingent Self-Esteem Scale, Paradise & Kernis, 1999) and self-esteem level using Rosenberg’s (1965) self-esteem measure. Subsequently, they participated in a laboratory session in which they were ostensibly evaluated by an unseen observer on their "presentation skills.”

Based on random assignment, participants received either an evaluation that contained insulting
or positive statements about their appearance and mannerisms. Following their receipt of the evaluation individuals indicated how angry and hostile they felt.

The researchers found that the more contingent the women’s self-esteem, the angrier they reported feeling in response to being insulted (Kernis & Paradise, 2003). Furthermore, the effects for anger still occurred after controlling for the effect of self-esteem level, indicating contingent self-esteem independently undermines the adaptability of individuals psychological functioning. Consistent with the contention that contingent self-esteem undermines adaptive functioning, Kernis and Paradise (2003) also found that the more contingent the women's self-esteem, the more they reported experiencing and expressing anger in maladaptive ways. Specifically, several weeks after the laboratory session, participants completed the Anger Response Inventory (ARI; Tangney, Hill-Barlow, Wagner, Marshall, Borenstein, Sanftner, & Gramzow, 1996) to assess various aspects of anger responses to hypothetical scenarios.

The researchers found that the more contingent the women's self-esteem, the more malevolent their intentions for expressing their anger (i.e., they wanted to get back at or hurt the instigator), the more intensely they experienced their anger responses, and the greater their desire to "let off steam." However, the researchers also found that women with highly contingent self-esteem, compared to those with less contingent self-esteem, were more likely to focus their anger inward and stew about it, chastise themselves for not doing anything, and lash out at innocent others and things. Thus, individuals with highly contingent self-esteem are easily angered but do not deal with their anger in constructive ways (Kernis, 2003).

Taken as a whole the findings reviewed from research involving contingent self-esteem and stability of self-esteem converge in demonstrating that the relative health of individuals’ psychological functioning is undermined when instability and contingencies are present.
Elsewhere, it has been proposed that both contingent and unstable self-esteem reflect various representations of fragile forms of self-esteem that compromise adaptive and healthy functioning (e.g., Kernis, 2003). The notion of a stronger sense of self involves a consideration of the multiple constructs examined in self-esteem research. In my view, a stronger sense of self in individuals is characterized by self-esteem that reflects a secure form of high self-esteem. That is, a stronger sense of self reflects having positive feelings about one's self that are not qualified by possessing specific contingencies of self-worth or global feelings of contingent self-worth. In particular, the current research places an emphasis on assessing secure high self-esteem based on measures of self-esteem level and contingent self-esteem as opposed to assessing self-esteem stability. Given that both contingent and unstable self-esteem are theorized to reflect somewhat overlapping dimensions of fragile self-esteem, and self-esteem stability reflects a particularly taxing methodology in its assessment, it will not be examined.

A stronger sense of self may also be considered with respect to how individuals' self-esteem configures with the structure of their self-concept. Kernis et al., (2000) suggested that a “stronger sense of self” characterizes individuals whose self-concepts exhibit healthy characteristics. The researchers proposed that a “stronger sense of self” reflects individuals with secure high self-esteem and clarity in their self-knowledge. Specifically, a stronger sense of self was conceptualized as feelings of self-worth that were positive and well anchored within one’s self (i.e., stable) and clearly understood. To test their hypotheses, Kernis et al., (2000) administered measures of self-esteem level (Rosenberg, 1965) and self-concept clarity (Campbell et al., 1996). In addition, self-esteem instability was assessed. Consistent with their hypotheses, the researchers found that higher global self-esteem levels were related to lower levels of self-esteem instability but higher levels of self-concept clarity (i.e., self-concept
contents that are more clearly and confidently defined, internally consistent, and temporally stable). Thus, a stronger sense of self appears to reflect characteristics involving *feelings of self-worth* and *self-concept structure*. As such, I now discuss the structure of individuals' self-concepts.

**Self-Concept Structure**

Self-concept organization has characteristically been conceptualized via consideration of cognitive structures about the self that organize and guide the processing of self-related information. Multiple constructs of individuals' self-concepts have been put forth in the literature, resulting in a diverse set of dimensions by which to examine aspects of individuals' self-concepts. These dimensions include complexity (Linville, 1985), differentiation (Donahue, et al. 1993), clarity (Campbell et al., 1996), compartmentalization (Showers, 1992), stability (Rosenberg, 1965; Kernis, Grannemann, & Barclay, 1989), consistency (Gergen & Morse, 1967), pluralism (McReynolds, Altrocchi, & House, 2000), and identity integration (O’Brien & Epstein, 1988).

Implicit in most conceptualizations of self-organization is a hierarchical organization of self-knowledge wherein specific contents or domains of one’s self-concept are subsumed by more global self-representations (e.g., general evaluations of one’s self). More specifically, Markus (1977) emphasized the role of *self-schemata*, or cognitive generalizations about the self, in characterizing the framework of individuals’ self-concepts. Theoretically, the total set of self-schemas one possesses and how they are organized reflect the central aspects of individuals' self-concepts (e.g., coherence, fragmentation, etc.), and therefore have specific implications for psychological adjustment.
Research has demonstrated that psychological adjustment relates to a variety of indices of self-concept structure. Linville (1987) examined self-organization based on how complex individuals' self-concepts were (i.e., the number of self-aspects used by participants to represent their self and the degree of redundancy between the self-aspects). Specifically, participants sorted a wide array of potentially self-descriptive traits (provided by the experimenter) into self-aspect groupings whenever the traits meaningfully described aspects of their selves or their life (e.g., "good student," "not always perfect").

Linville (1987) theorized that greater self-complexity minimizes the extent that the self in general is affected by external events, and therefore restricts the number of self-aspects that are adversely impacted from stressful events. Thus, she hypothesized that a high degree of self-complexity (i.e., large amounts of different or independent dimensions underlying the organization of their self-concept) would buffer against the damaging effects of stress following stressful events. Consistent with the stress-buffering hypothesis, Linville (1987) found individuals who were high in self-complexity experienced less depression and physical symptoms (i.e., headaches, stomach pains) than those who were low in self-complexity.

Self-organization has also been conceptualized with respect to the valence of individuals' self-aspects. Showers (1992) employed the same trait sorting task used by Linville (1985, 1987) and then had participants evaluate how positive or negative they felt each trait was to them. An overall index of self-concept structure was constructed that reflected the configuration of positive and negative evaluations of self-beliefs within self-aspects categories. More specifically, the index reflected the extent that individuals organized their self-aspects based on two types of self-organization: evaluatively compartmentalized organization, and evaluatively integrative organization. According to Showers (2003), evaluative compartmentalization reflects positive
and negative beliefs about the self that are uniformly separated into distinct self-aspects. When evaluative compartmentalization is present, individuals perceive their self-aspects as being either primarily positive or negative. In contrast, evaluative integration reflects a mixture of positive and negative beliefs within individuals' self-aspects.

Showers (1995) theorized that the evaluative organization of self-knowledge would influence the accessibility of positive and negative self-beliefs. Specifically, events or experiences are presumed to interact with the differential importance placed on individuals' positive and negative self-aspects in affecting psychological adjustment. Thus, when events or experiences activate self-aspects that are positively compartmentalized (as opposed to negatively compartmentalized), psychological adjustment is presumed to be enhanced due to repeated exposure to purely positive knowledge about the self. Research has found support for this interaction hypothesis when examining psychological adjustment based on conventional measures of mood or self-esteem (Showers, 2003).

Although research has linked self-complexity and evaluative organization (i.e., compartmentalization and integration) to psychological adjustment, Campbell, Assanand and Di Paula (2003) caution that such variables have yielded inconsistent findings. For instance, Morgan and Janoff-Bulman (1994) found that self-complexity and psychological adjustment were uncorrelated with one another, and Ryan, LaGuardia, and Rawsthorne (2001) found that self-complexity was negatively related to psychological adjustment. These discrepancies may be attributable to differences in the specific types of self-concept structure variables that are being examined. Recently, Campbell, Assanand and Di Paula (2003) differentiated self-structure variables based on two categories: unity and pluralism. In their view, pluralism involves the extent that individuals organize their self-aspects into a diverse, multifaceted self-concept. In
contrast, unity involves the degree that such categories correlate with one another (high unity) or are independent of each other (low unity).

Across a series of four separate studies, Campbell, Assanand, and Di Paula (2003) found that zero-order correlations among measures of pluralism (e.g., complexity or compartmentalization) failed to consistently yield significant relationships with measures of psychological adjustment. Alternatively, Campbell et al., (2003) found that self-concept structure variables reflecting unity (e.g., self-concept clarity and the average correlation among individuals’ self-described personality across 5 different social roles) were positively correlated with self-esteem and negatively correlated with neuroticism.

The purpose of examining self-organization constructs in the currently proposed investigations is to identify the relationship between dispositional authenticity and indices of self-organization, as they relate to individuals’ adjustment. Given the specific aims of the current proposed studies, measures of self-concept complexity and evaluative organization will not be included in data collection, nor further elaborated upon conceptually. Rather, only self-concept structure variables theorized to reflect a stronger sense of self (i.e., those that directly affect psychological adjustment) will be included in data collection, and discussed in the proceeding sections. That is, self-structure constructs that are proposed to enhance the unimpeded operation of individuals core self-aspects (i.e., authenticity), and their psychological adjustment will be selected for investigation and review.

*Self-Concept Clarity.* As previously noted, one measure of self-concept organization involves how clearly defined is one’s self-concept. Campbell, Trapnell, Heine, Katz, Lavallee and Lehman (1996) defined self-concept clarity as the extent to which the contents of the self-concept are clearly and confidently defined, internally consistent, and temporally stable.
Presumably, greater self-concept clarity reflects coherence of one’s schema for his or her self that provides inner resources thought to facilitate healthy psychological adjustment. Consistent with this line of reasoning, Campbell et al. (1996) found that higher self-reported clarity correlated positively with self-esteem and negatively with neuroticism, negative affectivity, anxiety, and depression. Thus, perceiving the self-concept as a unified structure appears to be associated with more healthy psychological adjustment.

Identity Integration. O’Brien and Epstein (1988) proposed that identity integration reflects a measure of “global” self-concept” and thus should function as a marker of self-concept organization. More specifically, identity integration has been described as reflecting the extent to which individuals’ self-concepts are efficacious in organizing and directing life experiences and in assimilating new information. In other words, identity integration reflects the overall adequacy of one’s self-concept in one’s general functioning. Presumably, an improperly functioning self-concept may have deleterious consequences for individuals’ psychological adjustment. For instance, when self-concepts are under stress, they tend to constrict, and consequently individuals’ tend to avoid new experiences (Epstein, 1980). Chronic or extreme stress may foster disintegration of the self-concept if individuals’ cannot unify or reconcile dissimilarity in the contents of their self-concept (e.g., Rogers, 1959). Alternatively, a healthy, well functioning self-concept should foster continual growth and development by seeking out and successfully assimilating new experiences. Empirically, individuals’ scoring higher on identity integration have also reported higher levels of self-esteem, expectancy for success, but lower levels of depression and neuroticism (O’Brien & Epstein, 1988). Thus, perceiving one’s self-concept as both adequately navigating one’s experiences and coherently assimilating them within one’s self is associated with greater psychological adjustment.
Self-Concept Differentiation. Other measures of self-organization may tap into more interpersonal aspects of how individuals conceptualize their self. Donahue, Robins, Roberts, and John (1993) examined the extent to which individuals see themselves as having different personality characteristics in different social roles (i.e., self-concept differentiation). Their measure of self-concept differentiation involves participants rating how descriptive 60 personality traits are of them in each of five different social roles (friend, son or daughter, student, worker, and romantic partner). Self-concept differentiation scores are calculated for each participant by correlating the 60 ratings of each possible pairing of the five social roles, factor-analyzing the correlations, and subtracting the percent of variance accounted for by the first factor from 100 percent. The resulting score is thought to represent fragmentation of the self-concept by reflecting the proportion of unshared variance among the roles. That is, higher scores on their measure reflect greater fragmentation (i.e., differentiation) in the sense that they indicate seeing one’s own personality as varying depending on the social role being considered. Across two separate studies involving college students and middle-aged women, Donahue et al., (1993) found that higher self-reported self-concept differentiation (i.e., fragmentation) related to greater depression, anxiety, and neuroticism, and lower self-esteem.

Functional Flexibility. Also examining interpersonal aspects of self-organization, Paulhus and Martin (1988) proposed that healthy adjustment depends on “functional flexibility” in individuals feeling capable to call upon behaviors involving interpersonal traits. More specifically, using interpersonal circumplex traits (Wiggins & Holzmuller, 1978) Paulhus and Martin examined how capable individuals felt to enact both poles of bipolar traits (i.e., warm and cold, dominant and submissive). Thus, rather than emphasizing internal consistency (e.g., Campbell et al., 1996), Paulhus and Martin’s measure considers self-organization as perceived
capability of enacting both poles of semantically opposite traits. This measure will be used in the current investigation because it enables a figure-ground interpretation of personality (a characteristic presumed to reflect dispositional authenticity) by considering how people perceive their selves with regard to both poles.

Importantly, Paulhus’ construct of functional flexibility predicts that healthy psychological adjustment involves flexibility in a complex self-representation that may or may not be internally consistent. In particular, this construct and measure share characteristics with the construct of dispositional authenticity, in that both posit that a complex representation of one’s self may promote psychological adjustment. Research findings indicate that individuals with greater functional flexibility report higher levels of self-esteem (Paulhus & Martin, 1988, Study 3). In addition, when rated by their peers, individuals with greater functional flexibility were rated as being more adjusted on an index of adjustment (e.g., “happy,” “well-adjusted,” “feels good about their self,” “self-confident,” and “positive about life”) than those with less functional flexibility (Paulhus & Martin, 1988, Study 4).

Identity Status and Styles. Self-organization may also be considered with respect to how individuals’ adjust their self-concept to assimilate their psychosocial experiences into an identity, as they actively cope with emerging social demands and developmental challenges (Erickson, 1959). According to Marcia (1980) identity is a “self-structure - an internal, self-constructed, dynamic organization of drives, abilities, beliefs, and individual history” (p. 159). This facet of self-organization has primarily been examined with respect to the degree that individuals have made meaningful life choices and commitments toward constructing their identity. For instance, Marcia (1966) defined four identity statuses based on the presence or absence of self-exploratory crises and commitments toward choices presumed to facilitate reconciliation of crises: identity
diffusion (no current crisis or commitment), moratorium (current crisis, no commitment),
foreclosure (commitment, no apparent former crisis), and identity achievement (commitment,
previous crisis is presently resolved). Numerous studies have found relationships between
identity status and psychological adjustment (e.g., tendency to worry, anxiety, depression). In a
review of 12 studies, Meeus, Iedema, Helsen, and Vollebergh, (1999) reported that individuals
whose identity status reflected achievement indicated the highest levels of healthy psychological
adjustment followed by foreclosed status, then diffusion, and finally moratorium.

Berzonsky (1988) proposed that how individuals engage and negotiate identity-relevant
suggested three identity styles that emphasize individual differences in the social cognitive
processes used to construct, maintain, and accommodate their self-identities (informational,
normative, and diffuse/avoidant styles). Information-oriented individuals “actively seek out,
process, and evaluate self-relevant information before making identity decisions. They are
skeptical about their self-constructs, open to new information and alternatives, and willing to
revise and modify their self-views in response to discrepant feedback” (Nurmi, Berzonsky,
Tammi, & Kinney, 1997, p. 556). Normative orientation individuals are characterized as
internalizing and conforming to standards and expectations held by authority figures and
significant others, whereas diffuse/avoidant orientations reflect an unwillingness to confront
directly and deal with problems and identity issues. Moratorium and achieved individuals have
been found to utilize the informational style, whereas those categorized as foreclosed are
associated with normative styles, and identity diffusion is associated with diffuse avoidant styles.

Nurmi et al. (1997) found that those with an information-oriented style reported the
highest self-esteem levels, while diffuse/avoidant styles, were linked with depressive
symptomatology. Thus, being open to self-relevant information (a characteristic implicit in the unbiased processing component of dispositional authenticity) appears to confer benefits to psychological adjustment and identity development and maintenance. In contrast, avoiding the processing of self-relevant information that is used in identity construction and development is associated with unhealthy psychological adjustment.

Implicit Theories. A stronger sense of self may also be thought of in terms of individuals’ implicit beliefs or theories (Dweck, Chiu, & Hong, 1995) that have specific implications for self-organization and motivation. Implicit theories reflect naive models about the extent to which human attributes (e.g., one’s intelligence, morality, or personality characteristics) are permanently fixed (entity theories) or are subject to change through one’s efforts (incremental theories) (Dweck & Legget, 1988). In being an element of cognition, implicit theories may assume a prominent position within individuals’ self-concepts that may affect how they process social information to guide, evaluate, and make sense of their experiences. Likewise, these qualities of implicit theories may have distinct implications for individuals’ psychological adjustment. For instance, incremental implicit beliefs are presumed to facilitate mastery or growth orientations (characteristics that are also linked with greater self-determination). In contrast, by possessing beliefs that attributes are permanent (e.g., “I failed the test because I am dumb!”) entity theorists may disengage from persisting in realms that are experienced with difficulty (Dweck, Chiu, & Hong, 1995). Thus, a “stronger sense of self” may be conceptualized with respect to greater endorsement of incremental theories that are characterized by holding beliefs that are conducive to growth oriented motivations that promote substantive personal development. Alternatively, entity theorists may reflect a “weaker sense of self” that stifles healthy motivation toward continual growth and development.
Taken as a whole, the findings discussed in this section demonstrate that broadly defined characteristics in the organization of an individual’s self-concept are linked with psychological adjustment. The development and maintenance of one’s self-concept is presumably also tied to one’s interpersonal functioning. Thus, how individuals' perceive themselves with respect to various social roles that they enact is also a meaningful component of their overall psychological adjustment. The relationships between social roles, self-conception, authenticity, and adjustment will be discussed later after I discuss motivation as another characteristic of a strong sense of self.

Motivation

What individuals are striving for and why they are striving seems to vary a great deal from person to person. Whereas some individuals may seek fame or fortune others aspire for intimacy or connectedness. Thus, the nature of individuals' strivings themselves may have important implications for their psychological functioning. For instance, Kasser and Ryan (1993) distinguished between various aspirations that may serve to energize and guide individuals' behavioral choices and their experiences. More specifically, they differentiated between extrinsic aspirations (i.e., financial success) and intrinsic aspirations (i.e., feeling connected to one's community). Extrinsic aspirations in individuals are motivated by contingencies that are external to them (e.g., an expensive car, others approval), whereas intrinsic aspirations reflect their internal tendencies towards growth or self-actualization (i.e., self-improvement).

When individuals find extrinsic values or goals more important than intrinsic ones, healthy psychological adjustment is presumed to be undermined (Maslow, 1968; Rogers, 1961; Deci & Ryan, 1985). In a series of studies, Kasser and Ryan (1993) tested this hypothesis by first having participants rate the relative importance that they placed on intrinsic (i.e., goals such as
affiliation, personal growth, and community contribution) compared to extrinsic aspirations (i.e., goals such as attaining wealth, fame, and image). In addition, several measures of psychological adjustment were completed including self-actualization (Jones & Crandall, 1986), vitality (Ryan & Frederick, 1997), depression and anxiety. Whereas the aspiration for financial success was negatively related to measures of adjustment, all three of the intrinsic aspirations positively related to healthy psychological adjustment. Specifically, in the first study, greater aspirations for financial success related to lower levels of self-actualization and vitality, and more depression and anxiety in the second study (Kasser & Ryan, 1993). Thus, differences in the contents of goals or values that individuals find important can function to enhance or undermine their psychological adjustment.

Self-Regulatory Styles. In addition to the contents of individuals' goals or aspirations, the processes reflecting why individuals pursue their goals may be important for their psychological adjustment. Research spawned from Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985) has emphasized the importance of self-regulatory processes in impacting individuals' adjustment (e.g., Ryan & Connell, 1989; Deci & Ryan, 2000). According to SDT, humans have three fundamental or basic needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. When individuals select and pursue goals that maximize autonomy, competence, and relatedness, they move one step closer toward satisfying their basic psychological needs. As such, individuals are theorized to be healthiest when their internal and external experience enables them to feel choiceful, effective, and interpersonally connected, thereby satisfying their core needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

One way that basic need satisfaction has been examined is with respect to specific processes involving the regulation of individuals' goal pursuits. Ryan and Connell (1989) suggest that goal pursuits are regulated in a self-determined manner to the extent that they reflect an
internal as opposed to external perceived locus of causality. When self-regulation is highly self-determined, individuals freely select and endorse their goals, and they perceive themselves to be the causal agent of their goal pursuit. In contrast, goals pursued to satisfy or accommodate others' expectations reflect little self-determination, and their perceived cause is external to the actor. While pursuit of such goals may sometimes be necessary, they do little to satisfy one’s core psychological needs, and, hence, contribute little to one’s psychological health and adjustment per se. In fact, excessive emphasis on such goals may foster motivations toward extrinsic aspirations that can actually undermine one’s psychological health and adjustment (Kasser & Ryan, 1993; 1996).

In characterizing specific reasons for individuals’ goal pursuits Ryan and Connell (1989) identified four self-regulatory styles that vary in their degree of self-determination. At one end of the continuum, intrinsic reasons (e.g., fun and enjoyment) reflect the greatest degree of self-determination. When intrinsic motivation is present individuals engage in their actions because they find the actions pleasurable, and not because they desire particular outcomes to emerge from their actions. For instance, a graduate student may work on writing his or her dissertation because writing is simply experienced as a pleasurable activity. Identified reasons (e.g., personally and freely valuing the goal’s importance) reflect slightly less self-determination. In such cases, goals are pursued because they are viewed as consistent with one’s values or important for promoting one's growth. An example of identified regulation is a graduate student working on writing his or her dissertation because it may help to meaningfully develop highly valued skills.

Reflecting minimal self-determination, introjected reasons involve goal pursuits undertaken by individuals because they feel that they "should" and because they will feel guilty
or anxious if they do not. An example of introjected regulation is a graduate student working on writing his or her dissertation primarily to avoid feelings of guilt or anxiety resulting from believing he or she should be working more often. At the other end of the continuum, external reasons (e.g., reward and punishment contingencies) reflect the least amount of self-determination. Here, goal pursuits are determined by causes that are external to the actor and are viewed instrumentally as a means to an end. An example of external regulation is a graduate student working on writing his or her dissertation in hopes of obtaining a research award or to avoid experiencing criticism from others who question his or her work ethic.

The more individuals' goal pursuits are regulated primarily for intrinsic and identified reasons, and not for introjected and external reasons, the more fully integrated their regulation is with their core needs, values, and interests. That is, when individuals select and strive for goals that more deeply satisfy their basic needs, their regulation is highly self-determined and more fully internalized within themselves. Such forms of regulation are referred to as being highly "self-concordant," (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999). In contrast, self-regulation that is relatively not self-determined reflects low self-concordance and thus does not promote the satisfaction of individuals' basic needs. Goal pursuits that reflect less internalized regulation (i.e., low self-concordance) may even undermine adjustment to the extent that such pursuits subvert the satisfaction of basic psychological needs in favor of less basic ones (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Supporting the contention that greater self-concordance enriches psychological adjustment, Sheldon and Kasser (1995) reported that when individuals' goals were highly self-concordant they scored higher on a variety of well-being and psychological adjustment indexes than did individuals whose goals were not self-concordant. These indexes included measures of
self-actualization, positive mood, and vitality (Sheldon & Kasser, 1995). Thus, self-regulation that reflects greater self-concordance confers benefits to individuals' psychological adjustment.

In longitudinal research, researchers have found that individuals’ well-being increased over time when goals were high but not low in self-concordance (Sheldon & Kasser, 1998; Goldman et al., 2003). For instance, in an initial session, Goldman et al., (2003, Study One) first had participants select their eight most important academic strivings from a list developed by Elliot and Sheldon (1997). Next, each striving was rated on self-regulatory dimensions (i.e., intrinsic, identified, introjected, and external). These ratings formed the basis of a self-determination index to reflect the overall extent that individuals' goal pursuits were regulated in a self-determined manner. In addition, several measures of well-being were completed including life-satisfaction, and Ryf's (1989) multicomponent measure of psychological well-being. Approximately four weeks later, participants returned for another session and again completed the same well-being measures assessed in the first session.

Goldman et al. (2003) proposed that more self-determined regulatory styles would predict greater subsequent absolute levels of well-being and increased change in individuals' well-being. Consistent with this line of reasoning, higher scores on the self-determination index significantly predicted more life-satisfaction, and aspects of psychological well-being that included autonomy, environmental mastery (marginally significant), growth, positive relationships with others, and self-acceptance. In addition, goal pursuits that were regulated to be more self-determined (i.e., highly self-concordant) predicted increased changes in individuals life-satisfaction, and several of the subscales for psychological well-being including autonomy, positive relationships, and self-acceptance.
Goldman et al. (2003) concluded that when individuals' goal pursuits are regulated with greater self-concordance, as opposed to less self-concordance, psychological adjustment is generally enhanced and fortified by increasing their levels of life-satisfaction and psychological adjustment. Furthermore, such benefits to well-being have been proposed to occur because individuals’ goal pursuits are more fully representing the operation of their authentic or core self (Goldman et al., 2003; Sheldon & Elliott, 1998). Consistent with this line of reasoning, Goldman et al. also had participants rate their academic strivings based on whether their goals were reflective of "who they really are as a person" (i.e., true-self goal ratings). The researchers found that higher scores on an index of true-self goal ratings (i.e., the summed true-self ratings of all eight strivings) predicted greater absolute levels of well-being approximately one month later. In addition, the true-self goal ratings index predicted increased changes in subsequent ratings of well-being, including life-satisfaction and psychological well-being. Thus, individuals’ psychological adjustment was enriched to the extent that they experienced their goals as being congruent with their true-self.

Additional research on self-determined regulation has examined specific characteristics of a stronger sense of self. Kernis et al., (2000) reasoned that, self-regulatory styles that are more self-determined reflect individuals’ tendencies to successfully integrate their experiences within themselves, and thus should be related to a stronger sense of self. Specifically, the researchers hypothesized that more self-determined regulation would reflect feelings of self-worth that are stable and positive, and a clearly defined self-concept. Consistent with this line of reasoning, Kernis, et al., (2000) found that the higher and more stable individuals’ self-esteem, the more identified and internal and the less external and introjected their self-regulatory styles. In addition, the greater individuals’ self-concept clarity, the more they pursued goals for self-
determined reasons. In short, goal pursuits that are regulated by self-determined reasons (i.e., reflecting authenticity) reflected a stronger sense of self, as characterized by clearly and confidently held self-concepts and stable and positive feelings of self-worth (i.e., secure high self-esteem).

Taken as a whole, the studies reviewed in this section indicate that goal pursuits congruent with one's core needs are predictive of a myriad of indices of healthy psychological functioning. In these studies, the more individuals' goal pursuits reflect fully internalized regulations (i.e., self-concordance), the more psychologically adjusted individuals appeared to be. Important to the notion of a stronger sense of self, healthy goal pursuits were related to feelings of self-worth that were stable and positive, and clear organization within individuals’ self-concept. In addition, the prior sections on a stronger sense of self suggest a link between self-esteem, self-organization, motivation and adjustment. However, global psychological adjustment may also involve experiences occurring within individuals' larger social networks. One of the objectives of the present research investigation is to examine the relationship between authenticity and individuals' adjustment within their social roles. Thus, the following section is devoted to discussing individuals' social roles, their relationship to the self and identity, and to psychological adjustment.
CHAPTER 4

SOCIAL ROLE FUNCTIONING AS AN IMPORTANT COMPONENT OF THE SELF

The nature of the self-conceptions that individuals possess may be considered with regard to specific social categories or roles with which they identify. That is, when individuals reflect on their qualities for the purpose of defining themselves, categorical (e.g., student) or attributive (e.g., intelligent) terms are ascribed (Hoelter, 1986). Thus, when responding to open ended questions such as “Who am I?” participants spontaneously define themselves in reference to specific social roles as well as personal attributes (Gordon, 1968; Côté & Levine, 2002). Thoits (1992) reported that 85% of the sample respondents indicated one or more social roles as self-descriptors to a five-item “Who am I?” test. Social roles reflect a unique form of self-conception in that social roles involve an identification of one’s self as a certain kind of person in relation to specific role partners. Also, social roles may represent a particularly important component of self-conception since “most daily interactions occurs in role relationships…and, many, if not most, social roles imply auxiliary or embedded social characteristics” (Thoits & Virshop, 1997, p. 123). In short, social roles are frequently enacted and presumably well understood as they involve socially structured patterns of behaviors.

Integrating Roles Into Identity

James (1890) addressed the complex relationship between self-conception and its evolution through social interactions, in suggesting that individuals have as many different selves as there are distinct groups of people whom one values. Furthermore, James stated that individuals “show” themselves differently across the various social roles they enact, concluding
that, “from this there results what practically is a division of the man into several selves” (p. 294). Thus, individuals' identifications with varying social roles are presumed to emerge in a "differentiated self," a self that is characterized by the unique attributes and expectations inherent in each particular role. This view of a differentiated self, suggests that individuals vary in their identification with a myriad of social categories and therefore experience diverse, sometimes even discordant, self-aspects when acting in accord with their role enactments. The notion of a differentiated self that emerges from individuals’ role enactments has been the primary tenets of identity theorists based in the sociological tradition (e.g., Burke & Tully, 1978; McCall & Simmons, 1978; Stryker, 1980).

Although the terminology and emphasis may vary between specific theories in their characterization of the nature of social roles in self-conception, there is little disagreement that self-conceptions involve interconnectedness between one’s perceived social roles and identity. For instance, Stets and Burke (2003) state that the “core of identity is the categorization of the self as an occupant of a role and incorporating into the self the meanings and expectations associated with the role and its performance” (p.134). Similarly, McCall and Simmons (1978) referred to a role identity in terms of performance toward a “conventional” dimension (e.g., expectations tied to social positions). They also noted an “idiosyncratic” dimension whereby individuals bring their own unique interpretations to their role identity. Such a distinction in role identity dimensions demonstrates that one’s social roles may reflect self-consistency (Lecky, 1945) when adhering to consensual role norms, but also considerable variability as role identities are influenced by individual differences within people and across contexts (Donahue, Robins, Roberts, & John, 1993).
General Role Functioning and Adjustment

Research examining the relationship between social roles and psychological adjustment is perhaps best understood by first considering how social roles are organized within one’s self. A common presumption is that since individuals socially occupy multiple roles, these roles are organized hierarchically within the self, based on their centrality (Rosenberg, 1979) or salience in self-conception (e.g., McCall & Simmons, 1978; Stryker, 1980). Salience can be construed as the subjective importance that a person attaches to each role identity (McCall & Simmons, 1978; Thoits, 1992). Thus the positioning of a particular role identity within one’s salience hierarchy is largely determined by the subjective meaning placed upon that role. Identities that are highest in their salience are expected to exert more impact on one’s psychological adjustment than those lower in their ordering within the hierarchy (Thoits, 1992). In addition, Thoits notes role-identities that are highly valued by society (e.g., spouse, worker, student) may also be highly salient and therefore should also impact psychological adjustment.

The relationship between specific aspects of individuals’ functioning in their role-identities and their psychological adjustment has been examined with regard to numerous constructs. For instance, researchers have examined adjustment as it relates to role-accumulation (e.g., Thoits, 1992), role-overload (e.g., Hecht, 2001), role-strain (e.g., Thoits, 1986), and role-conflict (e.g., Sheldon, et. al., 1997). Investigations examining role-accumulation have found that possessing a greater number of roles buffers against threats to adjustment (e.g., anxiety, depression), in part because possessing multiple roles may maximize one’s social support (e.g., Thoits, 1986). Marks (1986) examined a construct of role balance, defined as “the tendency to become fully engaged in the performance of every role in one’s total role system, to approach every typical role and role partner with an attitude of attentiveness and care” (p. 420).
Individuals higher in role-balance reported significantly higher role ease and self-esteem, and lower levels of role-overload and depression, than did those lower in role-balance. Thus, the findings on role-accumulation and role-balance suggest that psychological adjustment may be enhanced to the extent that one possesses an adequate number of roles that are fully engaged.

In contrast, other research inquiries have identified the deleterious consequences of certain role characteristics to psychological adjustment. That is, role-overload (when a person is faced with too many expectations), role-strain (when a person’s roles are overly difficult to enact), and role-conflict (when concurrent expectations are not compatible) have all been found to undermine psychological adjustment, when measured as felt stress (Biddle, 1986). In short, when particular characteristics of one’s roles are experienced as stressful (greater overload, strain, and conflict), psychological adjustment is undermined. Although specific components of functioning within one’s roles have been linked to perceived stress, Thoits (1992) cautions that such features of roles should not be taken in isolation. What also needs to be considered is the perceived flexibility with which one can enter and exit roles.

Using a randomly stratified adult sample of 700 adults, Thoits (1992) examined the effects of felt role-stress and role-salience in predicting psychological distress. Specifically, psychological distress was assessed by the degree that respondents experienced 23 symptoms from the depression, anxiety, and somatization subscales of the Brief Symptoms Inventory (Derogatis & Spencer, 1982). In addition, participants responded to a standard “Who am I?” open-ended question to determine which roles participants identified with. A measure of role-salience was constructed by having participants rate the degree of each role’s importance to them. Each role was also rated based on their perceived stressfulness. Thoits proposed that the more salient a role was the more it would impact individuals’ psychological adjustment. Contrary to
expectations, Thoits found that the salience of an identity did not generally relate to reducing psychological symptoms. Instead, it was found that more voluntary or easier-to-exit identities (e.g., friend, churchgoer) related to reduced symptoms. In contrast, difficult-to-exit identities (e.g., parent, son/daughter in law) were related to less psychological symptoms only when stress experienced in the role domain was low. Thus, it appears healthy role-adjustment is contingent on experiencing one’s roles with relatively low stress, or by enacting roles that afford a continuous sense of choice to enact them.

**Authentic Role-Functioning and Adjustment.**

In summarizing the previously mentioned studies on role-identities and adjustment, how one experiences his or her roles is generally related to psychological adjustment. Of particular importance in delineating this relationship is both the extent that one’s role-identities are personally chosen and the degree that one’s roles are perceived as stressful. As the findings in Thoits (1992) demonstrate, when roles are enacted with a greater sense of choice, individuals’ psychological adjustment is afforded more protection. Such findings are relevant to the notion of authenticity because when authenticity is operative in individuals their role-identities should reflect greater self-determination and psychological adjustment (Ryan & Deci, 2003). That is, when participating in role-identities that presumably maximize one’s experience of choice (a characteristic of authentic functioning), there is greater potential for distress-reducing benefits resulting from one’s social roles.

From the perspective of authenticity, the degree that individuals’ perceive their roles as being stressful is likely to depend upon their perceived choice to possess the role (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Sheldon & Elliott, 2000), and whether or not feelings of authenticity are experienced within their roles. That is, when possessing roles that foster feelings of authenticity, perceived
stress within such roles should be low, and individuals should more fully integrate the role within their self-conception because it was personally chosen. Consistent with this line of reasoning, Sheldon et al., (1997) attempted to predict psychological adjustment from various indices of individuals' organization of their social roles within their self (i.e., self-integration). Specifically, self-integration was operationalized with respect to five social roles typically performed by college students (employee, friend, romantic partner, son/daughter, and student).

One measure of self-integration was determined by initially assessing individuals' ratings of who they are in general, based on Big-Five personality dimensions. Next, participants rated themselves with respect to each social role on the same Big-Five dimensions. Self-integration was calculated as the degree of variability across all roles, from one’s trait rating of their general self. That is, high consistency of trait profiles across roles was considered to reflect low self-concept differentiation (Donahue et al., 1993) or fragmentation. Self-integration was also assessed via an index of role-authenticity that was constructed based on the mean level of felt authenticity across roles (e.g., “I experience this aspect of myself as an authentic part of who I am,” and “I have freely chosen this way of being”). Finally, these same indices as well as an index of role-conflict (also presumed by the researchers to reflect integration in one’s self-organization), was examined in a second study. Measures of functioning within one’s roles and measures of psychological adjustment were examined with respect to the indices of self-integration.

Sheldon, et al. (1997), identified several notable findings over a series of two studies. First, in study one the researchers found higher scores in role-specific authenticity were significantly correlated with greater satisfaction in all five roles, and greater preference to spend more time in each role with the exception of the friend role. Second, mean role-authenticity
ratings were negatively correlated with self-concept differentiation ($r = -.61$), indicating greater felt authenticity was associated with lower levels of fragmentation or independence of individuals perceptions of who they were across their social roles. Third, mean role authenticity ratings and self-concept differentiation (SCD) scores independently predicted adjustment, suggesting authenticity within roles uniquely affects psychological adjustment. Specifically, scores higher in role-authenticity and lower in SCD (i.e., less fragmentation or independence) predicted lower levels of anxiety, depression, perceived stress, and symptomatology, but higher levels of global self-esteem.

In study two, role-conflict was found to positively correlate with self-concept differentiation ($r = .31$), but negatively correlate with role-authenticity ($r = -.31$). In addition, role-specific authenticity was again found to positively correlate with satisfaction in each role, as well as negatively correlate with perceived strain and stress in each role. Second, each index of integration was again found to be independent predictors of adjustment. Specifically, higher mean-role authenticity scores and lower SCD and role-conflict scores predicted lower levels of depression, perceived stress, and symptomatology, yet higher levels of identity integration and self-esteem.

The findings of Sheldon et al. (1997), demonstrate the importance of experiencing authenticity in one’s social roles for fostering healthy psychological adjustment. Of particular theoretical importance, their findings indicate that examining the degree of felt authenticity across psychologically relevant social roles, functions as a proxy for self-organization. More specifically, given the pattern of findings, greater felt authenticity across one’s roles appears to reflect a stronger sense of self in one’s self-organization- a greater sense of choice in
participating in one’s roles, and greater connectedness of core self-aspects when enacting one’s roles.

Synthesizing Authenticity, Healthy Motivation and Role Functioning

The findings from Sheldon et al. (1997), are consistent with those in Goldman et al. (2003, Study Two) in demonstrating that individual differences in authenticity may influence the meaning of one’s experiences and the psychological health afforded from them. Also, both Sheldon et al. and Goldman et al. demonstrate that authenticity in self-organization can be assessed either by ratings of one’s goal pursuits or one’s social roles. Convergence across findings with social roles and goal pursuits in healthy psychological functioning may occur because such variables seem to reflect constructs resembling “middle-level units” (Cantor & Zirkel, 1990). According to Cantor and Zirkel, middle level units “emphasize the creative, forward-looking thoughts about self, others, and tasks that individuals have, and on the ways in which those intentions are constructed and negotiated in a broad socio-cultural context” (p. 136). Similarly, both social roles and goal pursuits appear to involve a complex of motivations and precepts that function to guide behavior and experience. Utilizing one’s social roles enactments or goal pursuits to meaningfully promote psychological adjustment is likely to depend in part on self-regulations organized toward authentic experience (e.g., self-determined regulatory styles).

Although the pattern of findings across various lines of research appear to converge in linking aspects of authenticity, self-organization and psychological adjustment, very little if any, research has simultaneously examined self-organization via goal pursuits and social roles. One notable exception can be found in Sheldon and Elliott’s (2000) investigation of goal pursuits, social roles, and healthy motivation (i.e., self-determined regulatory styles). Specifically, participants first generated a list of their 10 most important “personal strivings” (Emmons,
1986). Next, each striving was rated with regard to self-regulatory styles, to assess the reasons why one’s goals were being pursued. Finally, utilizing the same roles employed by Donahue et al. (1993) and Sheldon et al. (1997), participants rated the relevance of each of their 10 strivings to each of the five roles, based on the extent that doing well in each striving would “help improve yourself, and/or your circumstances,” in each role.

Sheldon and Elliott’s findings indicate a synthesis among previously reviewed investigations. First, they found evidence for considerable within-subject role differences in the degree that specific role-relevance ratings’ correlated with self-regulatory styles of motivation. Specifically, only the mean role-relevance ratings for the romantic relationship role and friend roles were significantly positively correlated with intrinsic motivation, whereas all roles (with the exception of employee roles, which was marginally significant) were correlated with identified motivations. Furthermore, when examining motivations reflecting less self-determination, only friend roles were negatively correlated with introjected motivations, and both romantic and friend roles were marginally related to extrinsic motivations. Thus, individuals indicated that certain roles were reflective of relatively high self-determination in the reasons they ascribed to their goal motives (i.e., more intrinsic and identified reasons) whereas other roles were indicative of relatively low self-determination (i.e., introjected and extrinsic motivations).

The findings reported in Sheldon and Elliott (2000) appear consistent with Thoits (1992) findings that social roles involving primarily voluntary participation or that were easy to exit were related to psychological adjustment, but roles that reflected difficulty in exiting from them were not related to adjustment. Specifically, roles that seemingly involve greater choice (friends and romantic roles) were the only roles found to positively correlate with more self-determined
motivations and to negatively correlate with less self-determined motivations. Also, noteworthy was that the roles involving less voluntary participation or ease of exiting (i.e., child and student roles), did not relate to intrinsic motives but did relate to identified motives. This pattern of findings seems to demonstrate that even when one’s roles impose constraints on one’s choice to enact them intrapsychic internalization (i.e., self-integration) can still be achieved in one’s motivation.

When examining role-relevance and self-regulation using a between-subjects level of analysis, Sheldon and Elliott (2000) found higher role-relevance ratings were positively correlated with both intrinsic and identified motivation for each of the 5 roles. Specifically, the researchers found that, in general, the more individuals' roles were relevant to their self-improvement or improvement of their circumstances, the more their motivation entailed self-determination. Thus, roles that are relevant to improving individuals or their circumstances tend to be regulated by greater self-determination. This finding suggests that particular characteristics of social roles themselves may affect how individuals regulate various motivations for enacting their roles. More specifically, social roles that are perceived to foster improvement of individuals themselves or their circumstances are enacted for more self-determined reasons.

In sum, self-organization, when characterized by regulation of one's social roles or goals appears to be linked to psychological adjustment in part because of inherent aspects of one’s goals or roles that support greater authenticity (e.g., a sense of choice). That is, to the extent that one's goals or roles themselves are perceived as consistent with characteristics involving authenticity, they should contribute to enhancing individual's adjustment. Consistent with this line of reasoning, Sheldon et al. (1997) found that individuals exhibited more healthy characteristics within social roles that maximized choice or minimized situational demands or
pressures. For instance, participants indicated being most extraverted, a trait consistently linked with more positive subjective well-being (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999), in their friend roles and being most open to experience in their romantic relationship roles. Alternatively, in the student role, one that seemingly involved less choice or greater situational pressures, participants reported the highest levels of neuroticism. This study supports the contention that adjustment can be enhanced or undermined by constraints in one's social role.

Delineating whether one’s roles supports or constrains healthy psychological adjustment depends on whether the role itself is conducive to experiences that directly impact authenticity. More specifically, roles that foster the operation of one’s true self are likely to be held central in one’s self-definition because they help satisfy fundamental needs for autonomy (i.e., choice), competence and relatedness. Alternatively, roles that are less relevant to the satisfaction of these needs may not be held, or may only be held peripherally in one's self-definition and therefore may have less overall impact on one's psychological adjustment. Consistent with this line of reasoning, Ryan and Deci (2003) elaborated on processes that determine to what degree a role is assimilated into one's self-definition. Specifically, self-concordant role-identities can be conceptualized in terms of the extent that one's role-identities satisfy one’s fundamental needs and are experienced as authentic, in the sense of being fully internalized and integrated within the self. In short, an important determinant of whether individuals’ roles influence their psychological adjustment involves the extent that the roles are prominent in the hierarchical organization of their self-definition.

As previously noted, characteristics of roles themselves may function to enrich or constrain adjustment (e.g., perceived ease of exit, role qualities that vary in experienced choice, distress, or pressure, etc.). However, it is also plausible that individual differences in
dispositional authenticity may maximize the likelihood that even relatively obligatory social roles may be experienced in ways that support psychological adjustment (i.e., greater self-concordance). As such, a major aim of the currently proposed investigation is to examine the utility of dispositional authenticity in predicting healthy functioning in one’s roles and more generally, broad aspects of psychological adjustment.

**The Interrelatedness of these Variables and Their Role Within the “Self-System”**

Taken as a whole, the prior review of authenticity, a stronger sense of self, and social role functioning demonstrates that these variables are intimately linked both conceptually and empirically. Furthermore, these interrelated variables are also extensively associated with intrapsychic processes that largely determine the functioning of one’s overall “self-system.”

Dispositional authenticity, a stronger sense of self, and role functioning reflect the interplay among core self-aspects that play a prominent role within individuals’ overall “self-system”. Deciding where to “break in” to this self-system so that the interrelationships among these variables can be examined depends on the particular focus of the theoretical framework that is being applied. The present study is primarily structured so that dispositional authenticity is considered a point of origin from which subsequent variables and their interrelationships may be examined.
CHAPTER 5
OVERVIEW OF PRESENT RESEARCH

In the present study I examine the relationship between dispositional authenticity (Kernis, 2003; Goldman & Kernis, 2002), characteristics of a stronger sense of self (i.e., self-esteem, self-concept organization, and motivation), global social role functioning, and psychological adjustment. Dispositional authenticity will be measured by having participants complete the Authenticity Inventory (AI-II, Goldman & Kernis, 2001). Prior research involving versions of this instrument has linked higher scores on authenticity with healthier adjustment including higher reported levels of self-esteem, life-satisfaction, positive affectivity (relative to negative affectivity), and lower contingent self-esteem (Goldman & Kernis, 2002). Thus the present study seeks to extend prior research by (1) examining individual differences in dispositional authenticity as a predictor of a variety of indices reflecting a stronger sense of self, healthy social role functioning, and psychological adjustment, and (2) examining the interrelationships between dispositional authenticity, a stronger sense of self, and healthy role adjustment in accounting for individuals’ psychological adjustment.

Study Aims and Hypotheses.

The present study is designed to examine the relationship and predictive utility of dispositional authenticity to a diverse set of measures assessing (1) a stronger sense of self (i.e., markers of self-esteem, self-concept organization, and self theories), (2) interpersonal functioning (e.g., markers reflecting general and authentic aspects of social role adjustment such as role satisfaction or role voice), and (e) psychological adjustment (i.e., global markers of
subjective and psychological well-being). In addition, I test whether the relationship between dispositional authenticity and psychological adjustment is mediated by either (1) a stronger sense of self, or (2) social role adjustment. Furthermore, I explore the utility of various models of fit among dispositional authenticity, a stronger sense of self, and role functioning, in accounting for global psychological adjustment.

Independent and Mediating Predictors of Psychological Adjustment.

Dispositional authenticity is examined as a potential independent predictor of psychological adjustment (when simultaneously examining a stronger sense of self as a predictor). As described previously, dispositional authenticity is presumed to reflect substantial self-knowledge and understanding, and objectivity in self-understanding based on a willingness and openness to know one’s self accurately (Kernis & Goldman, in press). In contrast to most measures of self-concept organization that assess specific qualities of the organization of one’s self-concept (e.g., how clearly defined it is), dispositional authenticity also assesses one’s prevailing motivational tendencies toward processing self-relevant information (i.e., unbiased processing component). Specifically, by assessing aspects of the self-concept in terms of the extent to which individuals have self-understanding and a sense of accuracy in their self-knowledge, dispositional authenticity reflects an interface between self-concept organization and its motivational properties. In addition, motivated self-evaluation is intimately tied to self-esteem processes (e.g., Kernis & Goldman, 2002; Mikulincer & Shaver, in press). For instance, fragile high self-esteem individuals’ may be particularly prone to “zeroing in” on self-relevant information that confirms their positive qualities and also strategically avoid acknowledging negative information that is presumably perceived as self-esteem threat (Kernis, 2003). Likewise, various components of a stronger sense of self may be tapped into when behavioral authenticity
is operative. For instance, when individuals’ actions resonate with their values, needs, and preferences, individuals’ feelings of self-worth are likely to be higher and more secure, and also to be accompanied by healthy motivations (e.g., self-determination). Although dispositional authenticity and a stronger sense of self are clearly intertwined, the particular emphasis of the multicomponent nature of dispositional authenticity may serve to affect adjustment independent of a stronger sense of self.

Dispositional authenticity may also be a potential independent predictor of psychological adjustment when controlling for the influence of role functioning. That is, highly operative authenticity may provide individuals with a depth of inner resources theorized to enhance their global interpersonal and psychological adjustment. For instance, by having greater self-understanding (characteristic of high levels of authenticity), individuals may be more likely to self-select appropriate niches in their interpersonal milieu to help sustain and promote their interpersonal and psychological adjustment. Whereas certain social roles may be experienced with great distress in some people, others’ may experience them to be opportunities for personal growth or meaning. In addition, by exhibiting greater self-acceptance in processing self-relevant information in an unbiased manner, individuals’ with higher levels of authenticity may perhaps be more inoculated from the influence of others when evaluating themselves. That is, if individuals’ self-evaluations are largely determined by applying internal criteria (as opposed to prevailing standards from others) such evaluations may affect psychological adjustment differently (e.g., greater self-acceptance for participating in a marathon race despite having not crossed the finish line). In sum, dispositional authenticity is theorized to reflect a wide range of important psychological characteristics that may differentiate how individuals’ experience their social environment or respond to characteristics of certain roles in general. As such, dispositional
authenticity may exert a unique affect on psychological adjustment that is independent of role functioning.

Taken as a whole, the prior discussion suggests that dispositional authenticity may exert a unique influence on psychological adjustment that is independent of both a stronger sense of self and role functioning. Specific models assessing authenticity as a unique predictor of psychological adjustment will be elaborated upon in the statistics and analyses section. However, it is also plausible that both a stronger sense of self and role functioning exert a unique influence on psychological adjustment that is independent of the extent that dispositional authenticity is operative. Below I describe why both a stronger sense of self and role functioning may exert unique influence on psychological adjustment, or even mediate the relationship between dispositional authenticity and adjustment.

With respect to a stronger sense of self, the capacity for self-understanding (i.e., awareness component of dispositional authenticity) is likely to depend on how effective individuals’ are in organizing their knowledge of self into an adaptive self-concept structure. The broad features of a stronger sense of self not only tap into such dimensions like how clearly defined individuals’ self concepts are (i.e., self-concept clarity), but also dimensions such as how adequately individuals’ self-concepts organize and direct their life experience and coherently assimilate new information (i.e., identity integration). These distinguished characteristics of the self-organization component of a stronger sense of self may contribute to its unique influence on psychological adjustment. Similarly, the self-esteem component of a stronger sense of self may perhaps exert a direct influence on psychological adjustment that is independent of authentic functioning. For instance, as the research by Taylor and Brown (1988), demonstrates, negative events or experiences (e.g., being diagnosed with terminal cancer) may be particularly harmful to
psychological adjustment to the extent that one’s adjustment is sustained by more accurate beliefs about one’s self (e.g., “I will likely be dead within six months”) as opposed to beliefs that are less accurate (i.e., illusory) but framed positively (e.g., “I’m going to beat this thing!”). Thus, a stronger sense of self may affect psychological adjustment independent of dispositional authenticity. As described in the example above, there may even be circumstances where a stronger sense of self and dispositional authenticity affect adjustment in opposition to one another. While these instances may be relatively rare, this line of reasoning suggests that a stronger sense of self may be more proximally related to psychological adjustment, and consequently dispositional authenticity may perhaps be mediated by a stronger sense of self. Specific models assessing a stronger sense of self as an independent predictor of psychological adjustment and as a mediator of the relationship between dispositional authenticity and psychological adjustment will be elaborated upon in the statistics and analyses section.

With respect to role functioning, individuals’ social roles reflect a pervasive portion of their overall day to day experiences, and therefore are presumed to play an important role in their general psychological functioning. Consequently, these experiences are likely to have an immediate affect on individuals’ psychological adjustment. For instance, one’s overall satisfaction in life may largely depend on the extent that one’s roles are experienced as being satisfying or that they are personally expressive of their core needs (i.e., self-determined). In short, one’s direct experiences are likely to affect their psychological functioning and role experiences are presumed to involve particularly important aspects of one’s overall life experiences. Furthermore, one’s role experiences may also reflect distinctly authentic functioning (e.g., the construct of psychological/role authenticity reported in Sheldon et.al, 1997). As previously discussed, the present study places an emphasis on assessing role
functioning that includes both general and authentic characteristics. Thus, if authentic functioning is occurring within one’s role experiences, role functioning may mediate the relationship between trait-level constructs of authenticity (i.e., dispositional authenticity) and psychological adjustment. That is, dispositional authenticity may exert an indirect influence on psychological adjustment by affecting one’s role experiences (including authentic role functioning), which in turn directly affects one’s psychological adjustment. Based on the line of reasoning that role functioning may have a particularly immediate and therefore unique influence on psychological adjustment, it may similarly mediate the relationship between a stronger sense of self and adjustment. Specific models assessing role functioning as an independent predictor of psychological adjustment and as a mediator of the relationship between both (1) dispositional authenticity, and (2) a stronger sense of self on psychological adjustment are elaborated upon in the statistics and analyses section.

**Hypotheses.**

I hypothesize that higher dispositional authenticity scores will predict (1) feelings of self worth that involve more security (a) higher self-esteem levels, and (b) less contingent feelings of self-regard; (2) self-organization characterized by greater (a) self-concept clarity, (b) self-integration (i.e., less self-concept differentiation), (c) interpersonal flexibility, (d) identity integration, (e) less avoidance in identity development and maintenance (i.e., less diffuse/avoidant identity styles), and (f) less implicit beliefs that attributes in general and in one’s self are unchangeable (i.e., less entity theories); (3) healthier interpersonal adjustment characterized by global functioning within one’s roles that involve more (a) balance, (b) satisfaction, (c) positive as opposed to negative affectivity, (d) self-determined regulation, (e) expressiveness of one’s true opinions (i.e., role voice), (f) subjectively felt authenticity (i.e., role
authenticity), and (g) feelings of enacting one’s true self (i.e., true-self role enactment), and less (h) role overload, (i) role stress, and (j) role strain; and, (4) greater psychological adjustment, characterized by (a) more life-satisfaction, (b) more general positive affectivity and less negative affectivity, and (c) more psychological well-being.

**Statistics and Analyses.**

Mean item scores for all measures and any subscales or meaningful categories embedded within them were computed. The mean item scores served as the basis for correlation analyses to determine how dispositional authenticity related to measures combined to assess a stronger sense of self, role functioning (i.e., interpersonal adjustment), and psychological adjustment. Specifically, a stronger sense of self was thought to reflect a conceptual category determined by consolidating the measures assessing self-esteem, self-organization, and implicit self theories (i.e., those measures identified in hypotheses 1-2 above). Social role-functioning was determined by the various measures stated in hypothesis 3 above. Finally, global psychological adjustment was operationalized as the consolidation of the measures of subjective and psychological well-being.

To empirically assess the utility of combining the measures into each conceptual variable, a series of factor analyses was performed. In addition a series of regression analyses was conducted to determine the predictive utility of dispositional authenticity, a stronger sense of self, role functioning and psychological adjustment in estimating the interrelationships between the variables. More specifically, four models were hypothesized to account for the prediction of psychological adjustment. Each of the four models were tested to determine the model of best fit among the interrelationships of the predictor variables (i.e., dispositional authenticity, a stronger sense of self, and role functioning) in predicting psychological adjustment.
In Model One (See Figure 1) dispositional authenticity is depicted as predicting psychological adjustment through the measures representing a stronger sense of self and social role-functioning. In turn, the effect of a stronger sense of self is mediated by social role functioning. In this model, the effect of authenticity and a stronger sense of self on psychological adjustment are entirely indirect. In Model Two (See Figure 2) I depict the same sequence of effects between the variables, however a direct effect of a stronger sense of self and of authenticity on psychological adjustment is anticipated. That is, both authenticity and a stronger sense of self are expected to exert an immediate influence on psychological adjustment. In Model Three (See Figure 3) I depict the same pattern as Model Two, except that the unidirectional path between authenticity and a strong sense of self has been changed to a bidirectional path where a stronger sense of self and authenticity are anticipated to jointly affect one another. In Model Four (See Figure 4) reciprocal relationships are shown between authenticity, a stronger sense of self, and social-role functioning, and they are each expected to directly affect psychological adjustment. Each of these hypothesized models was tested to assess which of the models provided the best fit of the data.
Dispositional Authenticity → A Stronger Sense of Self → Role Functioning → Subsequent Adjustment

Figure 1: Model One
Figure 2: Model Two
Figure 3: Model Three

Authenticity

Stronger Sense of Self

Role Functioning

Subsequent Adjustment
Figure 4: Model Four

- Dispositional Authenticity
- Stronger Sense of Self
- Role Functioning
- Subsequent Adjustment
CHAPTER 6

METHOD

Participants and Procedures

Participants were 76 undergraduate psychology students (40 males and 36 females) who received credit towards course requirements in exchange for their participation¹. The average age of the sample was 19.61 and the sample consisted of 72 self identified Caucasians, 1 African-American and 4 Hispanic participants. The study was conducted on three separate phases with data collection for each phase separated by approximately a week and a few days. Thus, total participation from phase one to phase three ranged from approximately 3-4 weeks. All data collection occurred in small group sessions (at least 3 participants present per session) that lasted approximately one hour. A schematic of the measures that were administered in each phase is displayed in Table 1.

Phase 1

The initial phase was designed to assess dispositional authenticity, and a variety of measures of self-esteem, self-concept organization, and psychological adjustment. Specifically, the phase one measures assessing self-esteem, self-organization, and dispositional authenticity were used to determine the relationship between them and subsequent psychological adjustment.

¹Initially the sample was composed of 82 participants. Five participants were excluded from the final sample because they did not complete one or more of the measures that were necessary for being included in the primary statistical analyses. Also, an additional participant was excluded for not having met the predetermined criteria of their native language being English (a characteristic deemed necessary given the amount of measures administered).
Table 1: Schematic of Study Measures

<table>
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<th>Phase 1</th>
<th>Phase 2</th>
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<td>Authenticity Inventory</td>
<td>Role Balance</td>
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<td>Self-Concept Organization</td>
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<td>Self-Concept Clarity</td>
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<td>Identity Integration</td>
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<td>Self-Concept Differentiation</td>
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<td>Entity/Incremental Theories</td>
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**Legend:**
- Role Authenticity
- Role True-Self Enactment
- Self Regulatory Styles
Phase I Measures

Dispositional Authenticity.

Participants completed an 88-item questionnaire (Authenticity Inventory; AI Version 2; Goldman & Kernis, 2002) designed to assess the extent that individuals exhibit the unimpeded operation of their core or true self in their daily enterprise. Specifically, the measure assesses four components of authenticity via separate subscales: awareness (e.g., “For better or for worse I am aware of who I truly am”, “I have a very good understanding of why I do the things I do”), unbiased processing (“I find it very difficult to critically assess myself (reversed)”, “I prefer to ignore my darkest thoughts and feelings (reversed)”), behavioral action (“I am willing to endure negative consequences by expressing my true beliefs about things” “I find that my behavior typically expresses my personal needs and desires”), and relational orientation (“I want close others to understand the real me rather than just my public persona or image”, “My openness and honesty in close relationships are extremely important to me”).

Participants responded to a variety of statements indicating their degree of agreement with each statement on 5-point scales (1 = "Strongly Disagree", 5 = "Strongly Agree"). Subscales were previously determined based on results from a factor analysis so that there were 45-items in total (i.e., composite) that included 12 awareness items ($\alpha = .81$), 10 unbiased processing items ($\alpha = .64$), and 12-items for both the behavior ($\alpha = .77$), and relational orientation subscales ($\alpha = .76$). Summary scores for each subscale were calculated such that higher scores reflect greater self understanding (i.e., awareness), more objectivity in self assessment (i.e., unbiased processing), greater congruence between one’s behaviors and one’s values, needs, and preferences, and greater sincerity in one’s close relationships (i.e., relational orientation). In addition, an overall composite index of dispositional authenticity was calculated by first
standardizing each subscale summary score and then by summing all four standardized summary scores together. As such, each component of authenticity contributed equally to one’s general dispositional authenticity score.

A Stronger Sense Of Self Measures

Self-Esteem Measures

Two different measures were administered to assess both individual differences in self-liking as well as self-esteem fragility (or security). That is, how favorable individuals’ felt about themselves in general was assessed (i.e., global self-esteem level) along with an assessment of the extent that individuals’ self-worth depended on their having matched particular standards or having achieved certain outcomes (i.e., degree of contingent self-esteem).

Global Self-Esteem. Rosenberg’s (1965) well-validated (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1991) 10-item measure of global self-esteem was administered to determine the extent that participants' generally or typically have feelings of self-worth, liking, or acceptance. Responses were made on 5-point scales (1 = "Strongly disagree," 5 = "Strongly agree") and were scored such that higher scores reflect more positive feelings of self-worth. Sample items include “On the whole I am satisfied with myself” and “I wish that I could have more respect for myself.” Individuals’ level of self-esteem was determined by first summing each item together after reverse-scoring negatively worded items and then dividing by the number of items on the scale.

Global Contingent Self-Esteem. The Contingent Self-esteem Scale (CSS; Paradise & Kernis, 1999) was administered to assess the extent to which individuals' self-worth depended upon their meeting intrapsychically or externally generated expectations, or having achieved specific outcomes. Participants indicated their responses to 15-items (e.g., “An important measure of my worth is how competently I perform”, “An important measure of my worth is
how well I perform up to the standards that other people have set for me”) on 5-point scales (1 = "Not at all like me," 5 = "Very much like me"). Degree of contingent self-esteem was calculated by first summing each scale item together and then by dividing by the number of items on the scale so that higher mean item scores indicate more contingent self-esteem. Validity and psychometric data are reported in Kernis (2003).

**Self-Organization Measures**

Five measures of self-organization were administered to examine broad aspects of individuals’ self-organization that were presumed to reflect a “stronger sense of self”. Specifically, two measures assessed self-organization in terms of intrapsychic evaluations: (1) how clearly defined one’s self-concept was (self-concept clarity), and (2) the effectiveness of one’s self-concept in assimilating new information and guiding life experience (identity integration). In addition, three measures were administered that were thought to reflect more interpersonal aspects of self-organization: (1) the extent that individuals’ personality traits exhibited inconsistency across their social roles (self-concept-differentiation), and (2) the degree that individuals’ had not yet decided how to reconcile various aspects of their identity including social roles such as their religious and political affiliations (diffuse identity styles). Finally, individuals’ implicit theories were assessed with respect to their beliefs concerning the extent to which intelligence, morality, and personality in general are fixed and unchangeable trait-like entities (an entity theory) or that such attributes are more malleable and subject to change and development (incremental theorist).

**Self-Concept Clarity.** Participants were administered Campbell et al.’s (1996) self-concept clarity scale to assess the extent to which the contents of their self-concept are clearly and confidently defined, internally consistent, and temporally stable. Responses to the 12-item
instrument were based on the extent that the participants agreed or disagreed with each of the statements (e.g., “Even if I wanted to, I don’t think I could tell someone what I’m really like (reversed),” “I seldom experience conflict between the different aspects of my personality.” Ratings were made on 5-point scales (1 = "Strongly disagree," 5 = "Strongly agree"). The degree that individuals’ self-concept was clear to them was calculated by first summing each scale item and then dividing by the number of items on the scale so that higher mean item scores indicated greater self-concept clarity. Campbell et al. (2000) reported that the average internal reliability of the scale was .90 across four separate studies.

*Identity Integration.* The identity integration subscale of the Multidimensional Self-Esteem Inventory (O’Brien & Epstein, 1988) was administered to assess individuals’ view of the efficiency of their self-concept in assimilating new information and in organizing and directing their life experiences. Responses to 10-items “I often feel that I lack direction in life—i.e., that I have no long-range goals or plans”, “How often do you feel very uncertain about what you want out of life?” were made on 5-point scales (1 = "Completely false," 5 = "Completely true"); or 1 = "Almost never," 5 = "Very often") depending on the corresponding statement being considered. To determine the degree that individuals’ self-concept was effective in assimilating new information and directing life experience was calculated by first summing each scale item and then dividing by the number of items on the scale so that higher mean item scores indicated greater identity integration.

*Self-Concept Differentiation.* Initially self-concept differentiation was proposed to assess personality fragmentation or the lack of an integrated “core” self (Donahue et al., 1993), and was operationalized in terms of the amount of variability individuals’ exhibited within 60 personality trait adjectives ratings made across various social roles. Using a condensed number of
personality trait adjectives identified in Sheldon et al., (1997), the present study participants’ were asked to complete a packet of questionnaires that assessed 30 Big-Five personality trait adjectives for each of five social roles (i.e., being a friend, a romantic partner, a son or a daughter, a student, and an employee), and for their self in general. Specifically, responses for each adjective marker were made on 8-point scales (1 = "Very uncharacteristic of me," 8 = "Very characteristic of me") where participants’ indicated the extent that each adjective was reflective of “their self in general”, followed by each subsequent social role (e.g., “think about yourself as a (insert role here) and rate the extent to which each term described you in that role”). Each role was presented on a separate page and the ordering of the traits was altered to constrain the likelihood that participants’ could deliberately respond consistently to subsequent trait ratings.

For each of the Big-Five personality factors six trait adjectives ratings were made: *agreeableness* (considerate, kind, friendly, cooperative, self-centered (reversed), patient), *conscientiousness* (organized, orderly, irresponsible (reversed), careless (reversed), disorganized (reversed), responsible), *extraversion* (extraverted, shy (reversed), talkative, introverted (reversed), timid (reversed), active), *neuroticism* (unhappy, insecure, self-confident (reversed), joyless, cheerful (reversed), moody), and *openness to experience* (artistic, imaginative, curious, open-minded, unartistic (reversed), adventurous). To determine individuals’ self-concept differentiation scores the standard deviation of each of their 30 personality trait ratings across each social role was first computed (e.g., the average amount of variability exhibited in one’s social role ratings for the trait adjective “adventurous”). Next, the mean of all 30 standard deviations was computed to represent a single index reflecting the overall extent that participants’ personality trait ratings had deviated from one another when characterizing themselves across their social roles. Higher scores therefore reflect a more differentiated self-
concept that varied from role to role (i.e., greater inconsistency in one’s self described personality). That is, higher scores connote one’s personality exhibits heightened malleability in individuals’ depictions of their social role enactments.

*Identity Status & Processing Orientations.* Participants were administered the Diffuse/Avoidant Style subscale from the revised identity style inventory (ISI; Berzonsky, 1992). Respondents rated 10 statements reflecting the extent that they avoid processing information relevant for deciding or reconciling their identity formation. Ratings were made on 5-point scales (1 = "Not at all like me", 5 = "Very much like me"). Sample items include “I’m not sure what I should major in (or change to)” and "I'm not really thinking about my future now; it's still a long way off"). Responses were first summed together and then divided by the number of scale items to reflect a mean item index of identity diffusion such that higher scores reflected more avoidant or diffuse identity negotiations. Cronbach's alpha for the subscale has been reported to range from .66-.76.

*Functional Flexibility.* Participants were administered Paulhus and Martin’s (1988) Battery of Interpersonal Capabilities (BIC) designed to examine functional flexibility (i.e., the extent that individuals have the capacity to adjust one’s behavior to the interpersonal demands of a wide range of situations). The measure incorporates the full domain of interpersonal attributes used in Wiggins and Holzmuller’s (1978) interpersonal circumplex model. Thus for each of 16 attributes (8-paired opposites; e.g., “Warm” and “Cold”), participants rated “how capable” they were “of being…(insert attribute here)...” when the situation had called for the enactment of each attribute. In addition, they were instructed to rate each behavior based on the extent that they experienced (a) difficulty in performing the behavior, (b) anxiety in performing the behavior, and (c) tend to avoid situations demanding such behavior. Each rating was made on 7-point scales (1
A mean item index of functional flexibility was constructed by subtracting the summed difficulty ratings, anxiety ratings, and avoidance ratings from the summed capability ratings and then dividing by the total number of items used in calculating the index. As such, the functional flexibility index assessed the average extent that individuals’ felt they were generally capable of enacting diverse interpersonal behaviors as opposed to experiencing much difficulty, anxiety, and avoidance of situational behavioral demands. Subsequent factor analyses reported in the results section found that functional flexibility did not load on to a general stronger sense of self factor. Therefore this variable will not be discussed any further.

Implicit Theories. Participants were administered Dweck, Chiu, and Hong’s (1995) 9-item measure designed to assess the extent that they possessed beliefs that certain attributes are fixed and unchangeable (i.e., an entity theory) as opposed to attributes that are more flexibly amended through one’s efforts (i.e., incremental theory). Greater endorsement of incremental self theories is presumed to reflect a growth/mastery orientation that is characterized by tendencies toward openness in one’s personal development and self-improvement. Specifically, participants rated the extent of their agreement or disagreement with each of 9 statements on 7-point scales (1 = “Disagree Completely” to 7 = “Agree Completely”). There were three items designed to assess implicit theories in general (e.g., “Our world has its basic or ingrained dispositions, and you can’t really do much to change them.”), and three items each designed to assess specific trait domains for morality (e.g., “A person’s moral character is something very basic about them and it can’t be changed very much.”) and intelligence (e.g., “Your intelligence is something about you that you can’t change very much.”). Responses were first summed together to reflect an index of the extent that individuals’ implicit beliefs reflected an entity theory and then divided by
the total number of items used in calculating the index. Thus, higher mean item scores reflected the average amount that individuals’ possessed entity theories.

**Phase II**

The purpose of the second phase was to examine broad aspects of individuals’ role functioning. Specifically, ten different role functioning measures were administered to assess various characteristics ranging from general markers of healthy role functioning (e.g., role satisfaction and stress) to aspects of role functioning presumed to reflect authentic experiences within one’s social roles (e.g., role voice and authentic self-regulation).

**Phase II Measures**

*General Role Functioning Indices*

*Role Satisfaction.* Participants rated a single item question designed to assess “how satisfied” they were with each of their five social roles on 9-point scales (1 = “Not at all satisfied” to 9 = “Extremely satisfied”). A mean item general index of role satisfaction was calculated by first summing together each role satisfaction rating and then dividing by the number of role satisfaction ratings that were made so that higher scores reflected greater satisfaction within one’s roles.

*Role Stress.* Participants rated a single item question assessing how stressed they felt in each of their five social roles. Specifically, participants were asked “How stressed do you feel in each of the five roles? That is, how much does each role contribute to your overall irritation and stress level?” Ratings were made on 9-point scales (1 = “No Stress” to 9 = “Extreme Stress”). A mean item general index of role strain was calculated by first summing together each role stress rating and then dividing by the number of role stress ratings that were made so that higher scores reflected greater felt stress in one’s roles.
Role Strain. Participants rated how much difficulty or strain they experienced in each of their five social roles by responding to a single item question. Specifically, participants were asked “How much difficulty and strain do you feel in each of the five roles? That is, how hard is it to behave in each role so that things go smoothly and satisfactorily?” Ratings were made on 9-point scales (1 = “No Strain” to 9 = “Extreme Strain”). A mean item general index of role strain was calculated by first summing together each role satisfaction rating and then dividing by the number of role strain ratings that were made so that higher scores reflected greater felt strain in one’s roles.

Role Balance. Participants were administered Marks and MacDermid’s (1996) measure 8-item measure of role balance designed to assess the extent that individuals become fully engaged in the performance of every role in their total role system. The measure is theorized to reflect an inter-role predisposition or orientation involving both a behavioral pattern of acting across roles in a certain way and a corresponding cognitive-affective pattern of organizing one’s inner life of multiple self representations. Specifically, participants were asked to respond to each of 8 provided statements by considering their experiences within their social roles “in General”. Thus, ratings were not constrained to the five social roles considered throughout much of the study. Ratings were made on 7-point scales that reflected the extent that participants’ agreed or disagreed (1 = “Strongly disagree” to 7 “Strongly Agree”) with the statements (e.g., “Nowadays, I seem to enjoy every part of my life equally well” and “There are some things I like to do so much that I often neglect other things I also care about”). A mean item index of role balance was calculated by first summing the scores from each item and then dividing by the number of scale items such that higher scores reflected more full engagement of all of one’s roles, or greater role balance.
**Role Overload.** Participants were administered an 8-item measure of role overload that was used by Marks and MacDermid’s (1996). The measure was designed to assess the extent that individuals experience their roles as being overly demanding and unmanageable. Ratings were made with respect to one’s “social roles in General” on 7-point scales that reflected the extent that participants agreed or disagreed (1 = “Strongly disagree” to 7 “Strongly Agree”) with each statement (e.g., “I need more hours in the day to do all the things that are expected of me,” “I seem to overextend myself in order to be able to finish everything I have to do.”). A mean item index of role overload was calculated by first summing the scores together from each item and then by dividing by the number of scale items such that higher scores reflected greater role overload.

**Positive and Negative Role Affectivity.** Participants were asked to complete a modified Affect-Balance Scale (Brunstein, 1993) to assess the extent that they experienced various positive and negative emotions in each of their roles over the past few days. Specifically, participants rated how often they felt each of 10 positive (e.g., happy, excited) and 10 negative emotions (e.g., upset, anxious) during their past few days when in each of the five roles. Responses were made on 5-point scales with anchors ranging from 1 = ”Very slightly, or not at all” to 5 = ”Extremely.” Net positive affect scores were computed separately for each role by subtracting the total for the negative emotions from the total for the positive emotions in the corresponding role. Higher scores indicated people experienced more positive, as opposed to negative affect. An overall mean index of general role affectivity was computed by first summing the net positive affect scores across each role together and then dividing by the number of net positive role ratings that were made.
Authentic Role Functioning Indices

Self-Regulatory Styles for Roles. Participants rated each of their roles separately based on the extent to which each of eight possible reasons accounts for “How you regulate your behavior while in the role of being a…(insert role here)”. Ratings were made on 7-point scales (0 = "Is not at all a reason," 6 = "Is an extremely important reason"). Two reasons were provided for each of the four reason categories that included external reasons (e.g., “I do it because something about my external situation forces me to do it”), introjected reasons (e.g., “I do it because I know I should do it”), identified reasons (e.g., “I do it because it ties into my personal values and beliefs”), and intrinsic reasons (e.g., “I do it because of the interest and enjoyment of doing it”). Each category for a particular role was analyzed together in a “weighted striving self-determination index” (see Ryan and Connell, 1989) to reflect the overall extent that the role was regulated in a self-determined manner. The weighted self-determination role index was created by first doubling the external and intrinsic scores (which are the two extremes). Then the external and introjected scores were subtracted from the sum of the identified and intrinsic scores. After computing each role separately, an overall mean index of general self-determined regulation was calculated by summing each of the weighted self-determination role indices and then dividing by the number of self-regulatory role ratings that were made. Therefore, the weighted striving self-determination index represents the general extent that individuals’ participation in their social roles is done for self-determined reasons.

Role-Authenticity. A measure designed to assess the extent that individuals’ experienced their roles authentically was administered. This measure was comprised in part of the original 5-item measure used by Sheldon et al. (1997). As such, participants were instructed to rate each social role with regard to the following statements: “I experience this aspect of myself as an
authentic part of who I am,” “This aspect of myself is meaningful and valuable to me,” “I have freely chosen this way of being,” “I am only this way because I have to be (reversed),” and “I feel tense and pressured in this part of my life (reversed).” In addition, the participants were asked to rate five items that were devised specifically for this study: “I feel I need to put on an act/show in this part of my life (reversed),” “I feel this part of my life is expressive of my true self” “I feel as if I am not truly being “myself” in this portion of my life (reversed),” “I feel this part of my life is in contact with my most importantly held needs” “I feel my participation in this role is consistent with the values that guide my life” Responses were made on 5-point scales (1 = "Strongly disagree," 5 = "Strongly agree"). The measure was organized so that each item was subsequently followed by the role authenticity ratings for all five roles, allowing for concurrent ratings across roles. An overall mean item index of general role authenticity was computed by first summing across each of the individual role authenticity scores and then dividing by the total number of role authenticity ratings that were made.

Role Voice. Participants were administered a 5-item measure of role voice that was devised specifically for this study and was largely based on a construct described by Harter and her colleagues (e.g., Harter, Waters, & Whitesell, 1997; Harter, Waters, & Whitesell, 1998). The items were designed to reflect a content domain to assess the extent that individuals are expressive of their opinions, thoughts, feelings, and values in each of their five different social roles. Thus, in contrast to subverting individuals’ expression of their thoughts and feelings, higher levels of role voice is presumed to reflect a distinctly interpersonal behavioral aspect of authentic role functioning. Responses were made on 9-point scales (1 = “Strongly Disagree” to 9 = “Strongly Agree”) such that all five role voice ratings were made immediately proceeded each of the following items: “I express my opinions in this part of my life,” “I share what I am really
thinking and feeling in this part of my life,” “I say what is on my mind in this part of my life,” “I express my point of view in this part of my life,” and “I let others know what is important to me in this part of my life.” Role voice ratings for each role were calculated so that higher scores represent more expressiveness of themselves in their roles. An overall mean item index of role voice was computed by first summing across each of the individual role voice scores and then dividing by the total number of role voice ratings that were made.

*True-Self Role Enactment.* Participants were asked a single-item question in each of their five social roles that was presumed to reflect the extent that they felt their true self was enacted in each role. The item was devised for the purpose of this study and was based in part on prior research (Goldman, et al., 2004) that used a single item to assess the extent that individuals’ felt they were their true self when engaging in their goals. The current item was developed primarily for its face validity and simplicity in characterizing participants’ subjective feelings of being their true self on a relatively unrestrained metric. Specifically, participants were instructed to “write what percentage (from 0% to 100%), that you feel you are fully your true self in each of the roles.” Participants then personally generated the percentage value that corresponded to each of their five social roles. An overall general index of the percent that one’s true self was enacted in their social roles was computed by summing across each of the individual true-self role scores and then dividing by the total number of true-self role scores that were made.

**Phase III**

The purpose of the third phase of the experiment was primarily to administer global subjective and psychological adjustment measures to assess whether dispositional authenticity ratings can predict subsequent ratings of psychological adjustment. In addition, phase three sessions were also used to assess demographic characteristics and for participants’ debriefing.
**Phase III Measures**

**General Psychological Adjustment Measures**

*Global Affect-Balance.* Brunstein’s (1993) measure of affect-balance was administered to assess the extent that participants’ experienced various positive and negative emotions over the past few days. Specifically, participants rated how often they felt each of 10 positive (e.g., "Happy," "Excited") and 10 negative emotions (e.g., "Upset," "Anxious") on 5-point scales, (1 = "Very slightly, or not at all" to 5 = "Extremely"). Net positive affect scores were computed by subtracting the total for the negative emotions from the total for the positive emotions and then dividing by the total number of items assessed on the measure. Higher scores indicated that people generally experienced more positive, as opposed to negative, affect.

*Life Satisfaction.* Participants completed a measure of global life satisfaction (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). This 7-item measure assessed how satisfied individuals felt about their lives in general over the past few days (e.g., “In most ways, my life is close to my ideal”, “I am satisfied with my life.”). Responses were made on 5-point scales, (1 = "No agreement" to 5 = "Very much agreement."). Each response was first summed together and then divided by the number of scale items so that higher mean item scores reflected greater satisfaction in life.

*Psychological Well-Being.* Participants completed Ryff’s (1989) multicomponent measure (shortened version) of psychological well-being by indicating the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each of 18-items. The measure is composed of six core components of psychological well-being: (1) *self-acceptance*, the extent to which individuals’ hold positive attitudes toward oneself (e.g., “I like most aspects of my personality”); (2) *positive relations with others*, the extent to which individuals’ have strong feelings of empathy and affection for others
as well as being capable of greater love, deeper friendship, and more complete identification with others (e.g., “Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me”); (3) *autonomy*, the extent to which individuals’ are self-determined, independent, and self-regulating of one's behavior (e.g., “I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions (reversed)”); (4) *environmental mastery*, the extent to which individuals’ choose or create environments suitable to their psychic conditions, (e.g., “In general I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live”); (5) *purpose in life*, the extent to which individuals’ possess beliefs, goals, and intentions that affirm a sense of purpose and meaningfulness in their life, (e.g., “Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them”); (6) *personal growth*, the extent to which individuals achieve their aspirations and continue to develop their potential to grow and expand as a person (e.g., “I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how you think about yourself and the world”). Responses were made on 6-point Likert scales (1 = "Strongly disagree," to 6 = "Strongly agree"). Each of these components was assessed separately in subscales composed of 3-items each. Mean item scores for each subscale was calculated so that higher scores reflected greater psychological well-being within each component. Similarly, a mean item composite score was created to reflect the average amount that individuals’ exhibited psychological well-being across each of the six components.

*Demographic Information.*

Participants were administered a measure assessing general demographic characteristics that asked them to indicate various self-aspects including their age, gender, race, and school status (i.e., freshman, sophomore, etc.). The frequency of nominal scaled information and mean scores for ratio scaled information was assessed to provide general descriptive characteristics of the sample.
CHAPTER 7

RESULTS

To facilitate the overall coherence in describing the data each variable is segregated into one of four basic categories: (1) Dispositional Authenticity Variables, (2) Stronger Sense of Self Variables, (3) Role Functioning Variables, and (4) Psychological Adjustment Variables. The descriptive statistics for the dispositional authenticity subscale ratings and composite measure scores, stronger sense of self variables, and role functioning variables are provided in Table 2. Table 3 provides the descriptive statistics for the subsequent psychological adjustment variables. In addition, Tables 4, 5, 6, and 7 respectively provide the intercorrelations for each of the categories of variables identified above. As previously described in the method section, whenever a particular variable involved providing ratings in each of the five social roles focused on in the study, a general (i.e., composite) score was calculated to presumably reflect broad aspects of individuals’ functioning for a particular characteristic. Thus, unless otherwise stated all subsequently reported analyses will reflect the single score index that was calculated for each category variable.

Factor Analyses

To determine the viability of combining the measures within the presumed categories of (a) stronger sense of self, (b) role functioning, and (c) psychological adjustment, all the variables within a category were submitted to factor analyses. For each category, the findings from an unrotated principal components factor analysis and a promax rotation were performed to determine the viability of a one factor solution. For each of the analyses examination of the scree
Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Dispositional Authenticity, A Stronger Sense of Self, and Role Functioning Indices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean Item Response</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dispositional Authenticity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unbiased Processing</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational Orientation</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authenticity Composite</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stronger Sense of Self</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingent SE Level</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diffusion Identity Style</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entity Theories</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity Integration</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Concept Clarity</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Concept Differentiation</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Esteem (SE) Level</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role Functioning</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Positive Role Affect</td>
<td>12.18</td>
<td>8.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Authenticity</td>
<td>6.56</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Balance</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Overload</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Satisfaction</td>
<td>6.93</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Strain</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Stress</td>
<td>5.07</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Voice</td>
<td>6.84</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Determination</td>
<td>9.42</td>
<td>11.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>True-Self Role Enactment</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Table 3: Descriptive Statistics For Subsequent Psychological Adjustment Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean Item Response</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affectivity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Positive Affect</td>
<td>15.39</td>
<td>12.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Life Satisfaction</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Satisfaction</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Psychological Well-Being</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Mastery</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Growth</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Relationships</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose in Life</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Acceptance</td>
<td>4.96</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ryff’s Composite Scale</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 4: Intercorrelations Between The Dispositional Authenticity Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Awareness</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Unbiased Processing</td>
<td>.48**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Behavior</td>
<td>.61**</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Relational Orientation</td>
<td>.38**</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Authenticity Composite</td>
<td>.86**</td>
<td>.69**</td>
<td>.77**</td>
<td>.60**</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Entries marked ** are significant at < .01
Table 5: Intercorrelations and Alpha Coefficients Between A Stronger Sense of Self Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Self-esteem (SE)</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Contingent SE</td>
<td>-.53**</td>
<td>(.85)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Clarity</td>
<td>.74**</td>
<td>-.58**</td>
<td>(.90)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Identity Integration</td>
<td>.52**</td>
<td>-.35**</td>
<td>.75**</td>
<td>(.85)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Diffusion Identity Style</td>
<td>-.25*</td>
<td>.21a</td>
<td>-.42**</td>
<td>-.51**</td>
<td>(.75)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Self-Concept Differentiation</td>
<td>-.33**</td>
<td>.22a</td>
<td>-.30**</td>
<td>-.22a</td>
<td>.34**</td>
<td>(.92)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Self-Determination</td>
<td>.24*</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.20a</td>
<td>.26*</td>
<td>-.28*</td>
<td>-.23*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:
Entries marked ** are significant at < .01
Entries marked  * are significant at < .05
Entries marked  a are significant at < .10
Entries along the diagonal are alpha coefficients
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Role Balance</td>
<td>(0.71)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Role Overload</td>
<td>0.31*</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Role Satisfaction</td>
<td>0.47*</td>
<td>0.27*</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Role Stress</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.30*</td>
<td>0.29*</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Role Strain</td>
<td>0.26*</td>
<td>0.33*</td>
<td>0.31*</td>
<td>0.61*</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Net Positive Role Affect</td>
<td>0.46*</td>
<td>0.28*</td>
<td>0.66*</td>
<td>0.30*</td>
<td>0.41*</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Role Voice</td>
<td>0.36*</td>
<td>0.23*</td>
<td>0.52*</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.22a</td>
<td>0.52*</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Role-Authenticity</td>
<td>0.54*</td>
<td>0.48*</td>
<td>0.69*</td>
<td>0.39*</td>
<td>0.49*</td>
<td>0.66*</td>
<td>0.61*</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Role True Self</td>
<td>0.53*</td>
<td>0.32*</td>
<td>0.60*</td>
<td>0.25*</td>
<td>0.46*</td>
<td>0.51*</td>
<td>0.56*</td>
<td>0.71*</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Self-Determination</td>
<td>0.41*</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.33*</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.38*</td>
<td>0.33*</td>
<td>0.41*</td>
<td>0.40*</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:
Entries marked ** are significant at < .01
Entries marked * are significant at < .05
Entries marked a are significant at < .10
Entries along the diagonal are alpha coefficients
Table 7: Intercorrelations Between Subsequent Psychological Adjustment Indices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Net Positive Affect</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Life Satisfaction</td>
<td>.50*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Autonomy</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Environmental Mastery</td>
<td>.27*</td>
<td>.34*</td>
<td>.26*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Personal Growth</td>
<td>.31*</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.28*</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Positive Relationships</td>
<td>.36**</td>
<td>.59**</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.23*</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Purpose In Life</td>
<td>.25*</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.27*</td>
<td>.30**</td>
<td>.20a</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Self-Acceptance</td>
<td>.51**</td>
<td>.72**</td>
<td>.27*</td>
<td>.46**</td>
<td>.36**</td>
<td>.65**</td>
<td>.26*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Ryff’s Composite</td>
<td>.49**</td>
<td>.52**</td>
<td>.57**</td>
<td>.66**</td>
<td>.51**</td>
<td>.60**</td>
<td>.60**</td>
<td>.79**</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:
Entries marked ** are significant at < .01
Entries marked  * are significant at < .05
plot and factor eigenvalues were used to determine how many factors to retain. In addition, individual variables were retained within a particular factor if they met one or both of the following criteria: (1) loadings were greater than or equal to .45, (2) the variable loaded highest on the factor within which it was included. The criteria was established in an effort to obtain factors that permitted a broadly defined content domain for each also sensitive to adhering to sound empirical judgment. That is, the criteria were presumed to not be overly stringent in constraining the overall factor solutions.

A Stronger Sense of Self Factor Analyses.

In total 8 variables were included in the factor analysis: Contingent Self-Esteem, Diffuse Identity Styles, Entity, Functional Flexibility, Identity Integration, Self-Concept Clarity, Self-Concept Differentiation, and Self-Esteem Level. One dominant factor emerged accounting for 43.4% of the variance (eigenvalue = 3.47). The next factor to emerge accounted for 15.6% of the variance (eigenvalue = 1.25). Inspection of the scree plot suggested that a one factor solution was most appropriate. Table 11 provides the factor loading scores for the component matrix of the unrotated principal components factor solution. With the exception of the functional flexibility composite the factor loadings for each variable had loaded on to the first unrotated component at the predetermined criteria of .45 or greater. Therefore functional flexibility was considered to not reflect the same factor structure as the remaining 7 variables. The remaining 7 variables were combined together to form an overall composite index of a “stronger sense of self.” More specifically, each variable was first scored so that they would uniformly reflect a stronger, as opposed to weaker sense of self. To accomplish this, the scores on each of the variables were first standardized into z-scores. Then the direction of the z-score values was reversed for all of the variables that had loaded negatively on the factor (i.e., positive z-scores received negative
Table 8: Factor Analysis On the Stronger Sense of Self Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contingent Self-Esteem</td>
<td>-.664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diffuse Identity Style</td>
<td>-.603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entity Theories</td>
<td>-.539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional Flexibility</td>
<td>.291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity Integration</td>
<td>.782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Concept Clarity</td>
<td>.903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Concept Differentiation</td>
<td>-.500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Esteem Level</td>
<td>.783</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Role Functioning Factor Analyses.

In total 10 variables were included in the factor analysis: net positive role affect, role authenticity, role balance, role overload, role satisfaction, role strain, role stress, role voice, self-determination, and true-self role enactment. Again, one dominant factor emerged that accounted for 47.2% of the variance (eigenvalue = 4.715). The next factor accounted for 13.5% of the variance (eigenvalue = 1.354). Examination of the scree plot suggested that a one factor solution was most appropriate. In addition, all 10 of the role functioning variables had successfully met the criteria for loading on to the first factor. Therefore each of the 10 variables were combined together to form an overall composite index of role functioning using the same procedure identified for the stronger sense of self factor. The factor loadings for the component matrix of the unrotated principal components factor solution ranged from -.468 for role stress to .900 for role authenticity and are displayed in Table 9.

Psychological Adjustment Factor Analysis.

An unrotated principal components factor analysis was performed on each of the three psychological adjustment variables: life satisfaction, general net positive affect, and Ryff’s composite measure of psychological adjustment. Only one factor was extracted that accounted for 66.8% of the variance (eigenvalue = 2.004) and examination of the scree plot suggested there was only a one factor solution. The specific factor loadings are displayed in Table 10. No subsequent rotations were performed because only one factor was extracted. Therefore, a psychological adjustment composite index was calculated by combining the standard scores from each of the three variables together.
Table 9: Factor Analysis on the Role Functioning Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net Positive Role Affect</td>
<td>.781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Authenticity</td>
<td>.900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Balance</td>
<td>.659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Overload</td>
<td>-.509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Satisfaction</td>
<td>.784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Strain</td>
<td>-.603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Stress</td>
<td>-.468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Voice</td>
<td>.675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Determination</td>
<td>.540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>True-Self Role Enactment</td>
<td>.810</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10: Factor Analysis On Psychological Adjustment Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life Satisfaction</td>
<td>.826</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Positive Affect</td>
<td>.817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Well-Being Composite</td>
<td>.808</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interrelationships Between The Category Factors

The interrelationships between the category factors and the component subscale scores and composite score for dispositional authenticity are displayed in the correlation matrix in Table 11. With the exception of a marginally significant relationship between unbiased processing and psychological adjustment, all of the four category of variables were significantly correlated with one another at the .01 significance level.

Regression Analyses

A variety of regression analyses were performed to assess how the various category variables affect one another in predicting individuals’ subsequent psychological adjustment ratings. Specifically each of the hypothesized path models described in the introduction section were tested.

Model One Findings

Model One examines a path where the effect of authenticity on psychological adjustment is entirely indirect. Specifically, authenticity is presumed to affect adjustment through a stronger sense of self, and a stronger sense of self is presumed to affect adjustment through role functioning (which exerts an immediate effect on adjustment). Figure 5 depicts the findings for the hypothesized pathways described in Model One. The dispositional authenticity composite ratings significantly predicted a stronger sense of self \(F(1, 74) = 79.862, p < .001\) (\(B = .720; R^2 = .52\)). In addition, a stronger sense of self \(F(1, 74) = 39.276, p < .01\) (\(B = .589; R^2 = .35\)) significantly predicted role functioning. Finally, role functioning was a significant predictor of subsequent adjustment \(F(1, 74) = 30.787, p < .01\) (\(B = .542; R^2 = .29\)). Thus, this model demonstrates the interrelationships between the category variables in predicting the direct and indirect pathways between one another (i.e., when the influence of one another is not controlled).
Table 11: Intercorrelations Between The Category Factors And Dispositional Authenticity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Awareness</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Unbiased Processing</td>
<td>.48**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Behavior</td>
<td>.61**</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Relational Orientation</td>
<td>.38**</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Authenticity Composite</td>
<td>.85**</td>
<td>.67**</td>
<td>.77**</td>
<td>.64**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Stronger Sense of Self</td>
<td>.70**</td>
<td>.52**</td>
<td>.58**</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>.72**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Role Functioning</td>
<td>.44**</td>
<td>.36**</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>.37**</td>
<td>.51**</td>
<td>.59**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Psych. Adjustment</td>
<td>.48**</td>
<td>.22a</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>.40**</td>
<td>.48**</td>
<td>.59**</td>
<td>.54**</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:
Entries marked ** are significant at < .01
Entries marked  a are significant at < .10
Figure 5: Findings For Model One Path Coefficients

Note: Entries marked * are significant at < .05
Specifically, higher dispositional authenticity composite scores predicted higher stronger sense of self scores, which in turn predicted higher role functioning scores. Finally, greater role functioning scores predicted greater subsequent adjustment.

**Model Two**

The findings for Model Two are portrayed in Figure 6. Specifically, the findings demonstrate the same path coefficients depicted in Model One with the addition of two direct paths of dispositional authenticity and a stronger sense of self to role functioning. The coefficient reflecting the direct effect of authenticity on adjustment was not significant $t = .390, p > .05 (B = .052)$, indicating dispositional authenticity was not a significant predictor of adjustment when controlling for a stronger sense of self and role functioning. In contrast, a stronger sense of self ratings did have a direct effect on subsequent adjustment $t = 2.683, p < .05 (B = .382)$, indicating that greater stronger sense of self scores predicted heightened adjustment when authenticity and role functioning were controlled for.

**Model Three**

The path coefficients for Model Three are displayed in Figure 7. Specifically, the findings reflect the same pathways depicted in Model Two, however, the direct paths of dispositional authenticity and a stronger sense of self to role functioning are also portrayed. The overall model examining the simultaneous regression of dispositional authenticity, a stronger sense of self, on role functioning was significant $F(2, 73) = 20.774, p < .01 (R^2 = .36)$. The model assessing the direct effect of authenticity on role functioning (i.e., controlling for a stronger sense of self) was not significant $t = 1.338, p > .05 (B = .180)$, indicating dispositional authenticity was not a significant predictor of role functioning when controlling for a stronger sense of self.
Dispositional Authenticity \[ \rightarrow \] A Stronger Sense of Self \[ \rightarrow \] Role Functioning \[ \rightarrow \] Subsequent Adjustment

Note: Entries marked * are significant at < .05; those marked ns are not significant (p > .05)
Rounded Lines = 2 Predictor Models
Dashed Lines = 3 Predictor Models

Figure 6: Findings For Model Two Path Coefficients
Figure 7: Findings For Model Three Path Coefficients

Note: Entries marked * are significant at < .05; those marked ns are not significant (p > .05)
Rounded Lines = 2 Predictor Models
Dashed Lines = 3 Predictor Models
sense of self. A stronger sense of self ratings did significantly predict role functioning $t = 3.405, p < .05$ ($B = .459$) indicating that a stronger sense of self exerted a unique effect on role functioning when controlling for dispositional authenticity (i.e., a stronger sense of self mediates the relationship between dispositional authenticity and role functioning.

**Model Four**

The findings for Model Four are displayed in Figure 8. This model tested for the direct effect of each category variable simultaneously regressed on subsequent adjustment ratings. In addition, this model introduces a reciprocal path between dispositional authenticity and role-functioning. Specifically, dispositional authenticity composite ratings significantly predicted role functioning $F(1, 74) = 26.149, p < .01$ ($B = .511; R^2 = .26$). Furthermore, the direct effect of role functioning on adjustment (i.e., controlling for dispositional authenticity and a stronger sense of self) was significant $t = 2.569, p < .01$ ($B = .291$), indicating role functioning uniquely predicts adjustment.

**A Comprehensive Integrative Model for Predicting Psychological Adjustment**

To provide a more comprehensive overview of the interrelationships between each of the category variables in their prediction of subsequent psychological adjustment an integrative model was tested. This model is portrayed in Figure 9. Specifically, this model is differentiated from the previous ones by providing all sets of findings for the direct and indirect effects of each category variable’s prediction of subsequent adjustment ratings. In order to avoid redundancy only new information that was not reported in any of the previously tested models will be reported. That is, the coefficients reflecting the direct effect of each variable on adjustment when simultaneously controlling for only one of the other variables is reported. Thus, the following reported analyses are for 2-predictor models of psychological adjustment (e.g., the effect of
Figure 8: Findings For Model Four Path Coefficients
Figure 9: Findings For Comprehensive Integrative Model Path Coefficients
authenticity on adjustment when controlling for role-functioning).

The overall model that tested the simultaneous regression of dispositional authenticity and a stronger sense of self in predicting adjustment was significant $F(2, 73) = 19.987, p < .01$ ($R^2 = .35$). However, the model assessing the direct effect of authenticity on adjustment (i.e., controlling for a stronger sense of self) was not significant $t = .767, p > .05$ ($B = .104$), indicating dispositional authenticity did not uniquely predict adjustment when a stronger sense of self was controlled for. In contrast, a stronger sense of self did significantly predict adjustment $t = 3.800, p < .05$ ($B = .515$) indicating that a stronger sense of self exerted a unique effect on adjustment when controlling for dispositional authenticity (i.e., a stronger sense of self mediates the relationship between dispositional authenticity and adjustment). The overall model depicting the simultaneous regression of dispositional authenticity and role functioning in predicting adjustment was significant $F(2, 73) = 19.405, p < .01$ ($R^2 = .35$). Authenticity $t = 2.441, p < .05$ ($B = .269$) and role functioning $t = 3.679, p < .05$ ($B = .405$) both uniquely predicted adjustment, indicating each predictor exerts a unique influence on adjustment.

Finally, the overall model depicting the simultaneous regression of a stronger sense of self and role functioning on adjustment was significant $F(2, 73) = 24.994, p < .01$ ($R^2 = .41$). More specifically, a stronger sense of self $t = 3.722, p < .01$ ($B = .415$) and role functioning $t = 2.667, p < .01$ ($B = .298$) both uniquely predicted adjustment, indicating each predictor exerts a unique influence on adjustment.

**Assessing the Effects of the Components of Dispositional Authenticity**

In general, the components of dispositional authenticity adhered to a very similar pattern of results when compared to the findings from the composite scores. However, there were a few exceptions. When examining the simultaneous regression of authenticity and role functioning,
neither unbiased processing $t = .304, p > .05$ (B = .032) nor behavior $t = 1.307, p > .05$ (B = .134) uniquely predicted adjustment (in contrast to the findings for the composite, awareness, and relational orientation scores). In addition, findings from the models testing the relational orientation subscale scores reflected some changes from the overall pattern of findings from the other authenticity components and composite scores. Specifically, the 2-predictor model involving the simultaneous regression of relational orientation scores and a stronger sense of self scores on subsequent adjustment scores revealed that both relational authenticity $t = 2.415, p < .05$, and a stronger sense of self $t = 5.397, p < .05$ predicted adjustment independently of one another. Finally, the full model assessing the simultaneous regression of all three predictors resulted in both a stronger sense of self $t = 3.510, p < .05$ and role functioning $t = 2.177, p < .10$ significantly predicting subsequent adjustment while relational authenticity approached statistical significance $t = 1.874, p < .10$. Thus, whereas a stronger sense of self and role functioning were meaningful independent predictors of psychological adjustment, the utility of relational orientation scores as a unique predictor was suspect.

*Assessing Change in Psychological Adjustment*

An expanded version of each of the previously presented models was assessed with time psychological adjustment ratings (assessed at phase one) also entered as a predictor of subsequent psychological adjustment (assessed at phase three). As such, these models tested for the unique contribution of each category variable when controlling for participants’ prior adjustment scores. When subsequent psychological adjustment was regressed upon any modeled configuration of the category variables that included initial psychological adjustment ratings (i.e., two, three, or four-factor predictor models) only the initial adjustment scores emerged as a significant predictor of subsequent psychological adjustment ratings. Thus, dispositional
authenticity, a stronger sense of self, and role functioning ratings did not significantly account for subsequent changes in individuals’ psychological adjustment over the course of about a month.
CHAPTER 8

DISCUSSION

The findings were supportive of the hypothesis that dispositional authenticity would be pervasively linked with markers of a stronger sense of self, role functioning and psychological adjustment. Composite ratings of authenticity and each component score were found to be significantly related to each of the category variables assessing a stronger sense of self, role functioning and subsequent psychological adjustment (the lone exception was unbiased processing was marginally correlated with subsequent adjustment ratings).

More specifically, higher dispositional authenticity scores were related to a stronger sense of self that reflected feelings of self-worth that were both more favorable (i.e., high self-esteem) and more secure (i.e., less contingent feelings of self-worth). Additional components of the stronger sense of self composite that related to higher authenticity included aspects of self-organization that reflected individuals’ possessed a self concept that (1) is clearly and confidently defined (i.e., high self-concept clarity), (2) effectively assimilates new information to guide one’s life experience (i.e., high identity integration), (3) are less variable or fragmented with regard to the personality traits exhibited across social (i.e., less self-concept differentiation), and, (4) are less prone to avoid processing self-relevant information used for identity construction and development. Finally, higher dispositional authenticity reflected components of the stronger sense of self composite that reflected heightened tendencies towards growth motivations when characterized by possessing incremental implicit self-theories (i.e., believing
one’s efforts have meaningful implications for changing outcomes in important self-aspects). In sum, greater dispositional authenticity reflected components of self-esteem, self-organization, and self-theories that involved a stronger, as opposed to weaker sense of self.

In addition, higher dispositional authenticity also related to healthy role functioning across a range of commonly enacted social roles (i.e., being a son/daughter, a student, a romantic partner, a friend, and an employee). For instance, higher dispositional authenticity ratings related to positive components of the role functioning composite that included more (1) satisfaction, (2) positive affectivity, and (3) “balance” of one’s total role-system. Higher dispositional authenticity ratings also related to other aspects of role functioning included in the composite that reflected experiencing less (1) stress, and (2) strain in commonly enacted social roles, and (3) overload throughout the total role-system. Finally, heightened levels of dispositional authenticity also reflected authentic aspects of the role functioning composite that characterized individuals’ social roles as being (1) expressive of their true beliefs and opinions (i.e., role-voice), (2) more fully involving of their true self (i.e., greater true self role enactment), (3) subjectively experienced authentically (i.e., role authenticity), and (4) were regulated by more self-determined reasons. Taken as a whole, higher dispositional authenticity was related to diverse aspects of healthy role functioning that also included several markers of authentic role experiences.

Finally, higher dispositional authenticity was linked with hedonic and eudemonic aspects of adjustment. Specifically, greater dispositional authenticity was related to greater psychological adjustment, as reflected in greater life satisfaction, more positive as opposed to negative affectivity, and more autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance.
The relationship between dispositional authenticity and the other category variables assessed in the study suggests that in general authenticity is pervasively linked with diverse aspects of healthy functioning. Specifically, to the extent that dispositional authenticity is largely operative, individuals experience healthy psychological and interpersonal adjustment ranging from self-esteem, self-organization, experiences within their social roles, and psychological adjustment itself. However, the extent that authenticity uniquely accounts for healthy functioning reflects a somewhat more complicated picture. Below I address the unique effects of each predictor variable to independently account for subsequent psychological adjustment ratings.

**Unique Effects of Dispositional Authenticity on Subsequent Psychological Adjustment**

The hypothesis that dispositional authenticity would exert a unique or direct influence on subsequent adjustment received mixed support. Specifically, dispositional authenticity ratings (as well as scores on the awareness and relational orientation subscales) independently predicted adjustment when controlling for the influence of role functioning. This finding suggests that independent of individuals’ experiences within their roles, the extent that their true or core self is largely operative in general substantially affects the likelihood that psychological adjustment emerges. One limitation of the originally tested path models was that the simple model assessing the direct effect of dispositional authenticity and role functioning (while ignoring a stronger sense of self) was not examined.

In contrast, the hypothesis that authenticity would independently predict adjustment when controlling for a stronger sense of self ratings received little support. Specifically, dispositional authenticity ratings (for composite scores and all subscales except the relational orientation) did not significantly account for adjustment whenever a stronger sense of self was being controlled for (as evidenced by the findings from Model Two, Model Three and Model Four). Thus, it
appears that dispositional authenticity generally exerts an indirect effect on adjustment when the influence of a stronger sense of self is being controlled. That is, dispositional authenticity’s influence on adjustment appears to be mediated by a stronger sense of self, suggesting that dispositional authenticity affects adjustment indirectly through its relationship with a stronger sense of self, which in turn affects individuals’ adjustment.

**Unique Effects of A Stronger Sense of Self on Subsequent Psychological Adjustment**

The hypothesis that a stronger sense of self would exert a direct influence on psychological adjustment was largely supported. Specifically, a stronger sense of self independently predicted adjustment when controlling for either dispositional authenticity ratings or role functioning ratings by themselves. Thus, a stronger sense of self appears to exert a unique effect on adjustment (as evidenced in Models Two, Three and Four). In addition, the overall model assessing all three predictors simultaneously indicates that a stronger sense of self independently predicts adjustment when both dispositional authenticity and role functioning ratings were controlled. Thus, a stronger sense of self appears to exert an immediate influence on individuals’ subsequent adjustment ratings, such that the more individuals’ exhibited a stronger sense of self, the more psychological adjustment they reported.

**Unique Effects of Role Functioning on Subsequent Psychological Adjustment**

The hypothesis that role functioning would exert a direct influence on adjustment was largely supported. Role functioning was found to be an independent predictor of adjustment when either dispositional authenticity ratings or a stronger sense of self ratings were being controlled. Similar to the findings for a stronger sense of self, role functioning emerged as an independent predictor of adjustment when both dispositional authenticity and a stronger sense of self ratings were simultaneously controlled for (as evidenced by Model Four). Therefore, role
functioning ratings seem to directly affect adjustment such that role functioning that was
generally more healthy and also more authentic predicted more psychological adjustment.

*Understanding the Role of Authenticity in Affecting Psychological Adjustment*

Taken as a whole the findings provide some insight into how the interrelationships
between each composite predictor variable affects psychological adjustment. Several possibilities
emerge when assessing the various pathways by which dispositional authenticity may affect
psychological adjustment. When only the interrelationship between dispositional authenticity and
role functioning is considered, both predictors exerted a unique influence on adjustment. This
finding suggests that when individuals’ true selves are largely operative in general, or their role
experiences are pervasively healthy ones (i.e., satisfying, expressive of their true opinions, etc.)
they experience more adjustment. From this perspective individual differences in either
dispositional authenticity or one’s experiences within commonly enacted social roles may
determine the extent that they are psychologically adjusted.

However, it appears that when a stronger sense of self is also being considered,
dispositional authenticity affects adjustment indirectly by exerting a unique influence on a
stronger sense of self, which in turn has a direct effect on adjustment. From this view, the extent
that individuals true selves are operative affects important self-aspect characteristics including
their self-esteem, the organization of their self-concept, and the nature of the types of theories
they possess about themselves, and these characteristics then directly affect adjustment.

When examining each of the separate components of authenticity (as opposed to the
previously discussed composite findings), a convergent pattern emerged. Specifically, none of
the components were found to be significant independent predictors of subsequent psychological
adjustment whenever a stronger sense of self was controlled for (however, relational orientation
scores approached significance). Thus, the authenticity components appear to generally resemble the composite measure of authenticity, that is, awareness, unbiased processing, behavior, and relational orientation scores indirectly affect adjustment. The marginal finding for relational orientation scores may warrant future investigation to determine whether relational authenticity may modify the overall manner in which the predictors interrelate to account for adjustment.

The marginal effect found for relational authenticity may perhaps highlight the importance of interpersonal processes in affecting psychological adjustment. While admittedly speculative, the findings from the role functioning composite indicated role functioning had predicted adjustment independently of a stronger sense of self. Furthermore, the relational orientation construct and components of the composite for role functioning may reflect somewhat overlapping dimensions. Specifically, the role functioning factor was composed of some characteristics that presumably reflect authentic role experiences (i.e., role voice, role authenticity, true-self role enactments, and self-determined regulation). In addition, the relational orientation component is characterized in terms of close relationships that presumably may have similarly been assessed via intimate social roles within the role functioning composite (i.e., being a son/daughter, a romantic partner, or even a friend). Future research may want to more precisely examine the interrelationships between these composite predictors within particular roles themselves to determine if dispositional authenticity may interact with certain role enactments. That is, perhaps dispositional authenticity exerts a more prominent influence on adjustment by affecting individuals’ functioning in roles that are typically highly pressured, demanding, or largely constraining of autonomous functioning (e.g., being a student or an employee).
Limitations of the Current Study and Future Proposed Research

The present study exhibited several limitations. Characteristics of the sample itself may have been limited. First, the sample was largely homogeneous with respect to race (i.e., 72 of the 76 participants were self-identified Caucasians). Future studies may directly target samples that exhibit greater racial diversity or that may generalize to other ages, ethnicities, or perhaps even other regions where the subjective meaning of authenticity or authentic role functioning may vary. Second, the small sample size used in the study was relatively small and consequently may have constrained the power to detect relationships that satisfied criteria for statistical significance. With a larger sample, perhaps dispositional authenticity would have yielded direct effects on psychological adjustment.

In addition, the pattern of findings from this study may not generalize to situations involving individuals’ functioning in other types of social roles. More specifically, the present study sought to examine a broad representation of social roles presumed to be both importantly held and commonly enacted to the target sample of college students. While the findings were largely informative of the interrelationships between dispositional authenticity, a stronger sense of self, and general role functioning in predicting adjustment, different aspects of roles themselves may perhaps result in a different pattern of results. For instance, perhaps targeting social roles that conduce to certain age groups (e.g., older adults’ parent or professional status), or stigmas (e.g., divorcée, handicapped) may have implications for how the interrelationships between the variables configure in affecting psychological adjustment. Similarly, the importance of a role or degree of specification for a particular role may also perhaps have influential affects on adjustment (e.g., being a psychology major as opposed to a student). Thus, future research in which participants self generate their own importantly held social roles may enable an
examination of idiosyncratic roles that are either highly personalized or even unconventional, but nonetheless may have important implications for the extent that their role functioning exhibits authenticity or even confers benefits to their adjustment.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the present study sought to examine how dispositional authenticity relates to important components of self-processes, and global interpersonal and psychological adjustment. The findings demonstrated that authenticity is pervasively linked with meaningful aspects of healthy functioning. Specifically, higher dispositional authenticity was associated with diverse markers of (1) “a stronger sense of self” (e.g., secure and high self-esteem, clarity and consistency in one’s self-concept organization), (2) global interpersonal adjustment (e.g., role experiences that are satisfying and expressive of one’s true self), and (3) psychological adjustment (e.g., greater life satisfaction and psychological adjustment).

In addition, the present study also sought to examine how dispositional authenticity may configure with a stronger sense of self, and social role functioning in predicting individuals’ subsequent levels of psychological adjustment. Several models were tested to assess various paths between dispositional authenticity and the other predictors to account for psychological adjustment. The findings indicated that when controlling for the influence of each other, both dispositional authenticity and role functioning had a direct effect on psychological adjustment. In contrast, when both a stronger sense of self and dispositional authenticity were examined as simultaneous predictors, only a stronger sense of self exerted an independent influence on subsequent adjustment. Finally, when all three predictors were simultaneously examined, both a stronger sense of self and role functioning scores independently predicted adjustment, but authenticity scores did not. Taken as a whole, the present findings suggest that dispositional
authenticity influences psychological adjustment indirectly by its affect on either a stronger sense of self or one’s role experiences.
REFERENCES


Tangney, Hill-Barlow, Wagner, Marshall, Borenstein, Sanftner & Gramzow (1996)


