



**The Dark Side of Authenticity**

by

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Masters Thesis

Social, Health, Organizational Psychology

July 10, 2020

Word count: 10,743

Publicly accessible

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## ABSTRACT

Workplace authenticity is a person-centered state that refers to the alignment between one's thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, and job tasks or conditions. Authenticity transpires when an individual is able "to act in accord with the true self" (Harter, 2002, p.382). Previous studies have focused on identifying the benefits of acting authentically at work. Conversely, the present study examined possible antecedents, behaviours, and outcomes that emerge when authenticity has a "dark side". Specifically, this study examined whether there were individual differences in how authenticity was manifested amongst those with undesirable personalities (i.e., the Dark Triad). We also investigated the role of job crafting in achieving authenticity, and the impact that this has on work outcomes. Hierarchical regression and mediation analyses, using cross-sectional data from 172 participants, revealed that authenticity is positively associated with positive work outcomes, and negatively associated with negative outcomes. Lower levels of Machiavellianism-psychopathy were associated with greater felt authenticity, but having dark traits was linked with increased counterproductive work behaviours and interpersonal conflict. Additionally, we found job crafting behaviours as positive predictors of both positive and harmful work outcomes, and that authenticity is involved in these relationships. Finally, Dark Triad individuals did not engage in more job crafting, nor did the relationship between job crafting and work outcomes differ if one had Dark Triad attributes. Overall, these results elucidate that there are circumstances in which authenticity may have a dark side.

*Keywords:* Authenticity, Dark Triad, job crafting, counterproductive work behaviour

### The Dark Side of Authenticity

How often do you find yourself completing tasks at work that truly embody your innermost thoughts, feelings, and values? If you have had such an occurrence then you have experienced authenticity. Authenticity transpires when an individual is able “to act in accord with the true self” (Harter, 2002, p.382). For example, at work, an authentic employee may feel confident expressing their honest opinion, or presenting an idea that they are truly passionate about. Previous studies have consistently associated felt authenticity with greater psychological well-being such as: higher life satisfaction, decreased anxiety, and greater self-esteem (Wood, Linley, Maltby, Baliousis, & Joseph, 2008). In a work context, authenticity has been linked with increased work engagement and in-role performance (Van den Bosch & Taris, 2014, 2018). Alternatively, a diminished sense of authenticity has been correlated with increases in psychopathology such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (Wood et al., 2008).

Despite the numerous benefits of authenticity that have been discovered, it is apparent that most studies have neglected to investigate the potential negative consequences of authenticity. It is conceivable that the advantageous results of individual authenticity may actually disappear at a group or organizational level. An individual pursuing authenticity will likely select tasks that fulfill a sense of personal joy. However, it remains unclear whether the motivation underlying one’s decision to act authentically can influence the type of behaviour displayed at work. For instance, some individuals may be driven by self-interest to handpick desirable tasks, and leave the remaining unwanted activities for colleagues. We suspected that these inherent motivations might vary based upon individual differences in personality characteristics. Consequently, in this thesis we examined the factors related to the types of people and their intentions to pursue authenticity, as well as a potential mechanism used to achieve authenticity. The objective of this study was to propose and test a model to address these unanswered questions regarding the possible “dark side” of authenticity (see Figure 1).

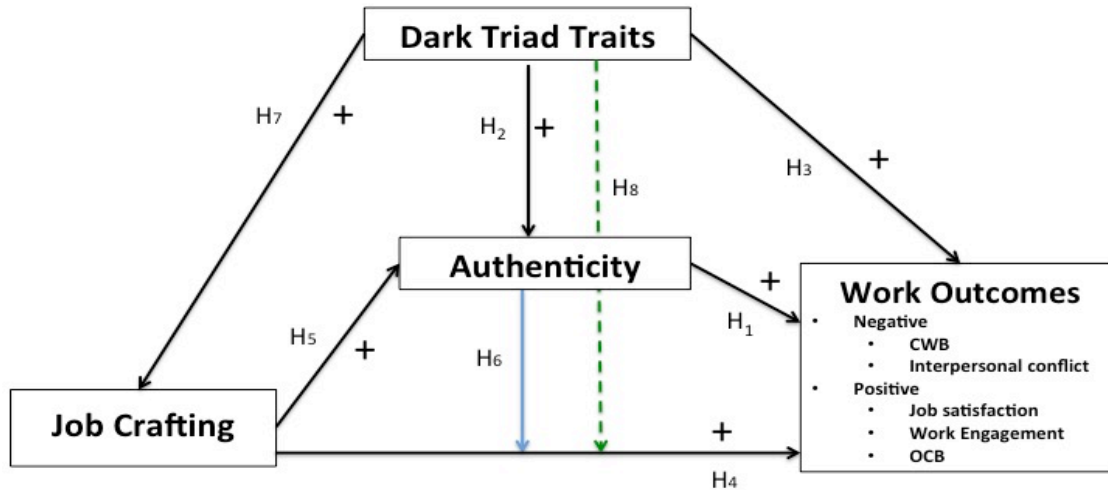


Figure 1. Heuristic Model of the Dark Side of Authenticity.

### Authenticity

Authenticity is a person-centered construct that refers to the congruency between one's thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. Barrett-Lennard (1998) suggested that authenticity is a tripartite concept comprised of (lack of) self-alienation, authentic living, and (not) accepting external influence. Particularly, self-alienation –as an indicator of the absence of authenticity- occurs when individuals feel that they do not know themselves. This occurs as a result of inconsistency between conscious awareness of one's emotions and the cognitions they are actually experiencing (Wood et al., 2008). Someone feeling self-alienated may lack self-knowledge, or experience an obvious disconnect between their thoughts or feelings and the reality of the situation. For example, these people may have cognitions like "I know I am outgoing and assertive amongst friends, but at work I am too timid to share my ideas". Authentic living, another facet of authenticity, emerges when there is a match between one's conscious awareness and his or her outward expression (Wood et al., 2008). This entails expressing behaviours that are reflective of a person's true values and cognitions. Wood et al. (2008) advise that external influence is the final factor encompassing authenticity. They suggest that accepting social influence is a potential barrier to authenticity because by conforming to the expectations of others, the less your actions are based on your true thoughts and feelings.

It has been debated whether authenticity should be conceptualized as a temporal state (e.g., Metin, Taris, Peeters, van Beek, & Van den Bosch, 2016) or dispositional trait (e.g., Kernis & Goldman, 2006; Wood et al., 2008). However, Sheldon, Ryan, Rawsthorne, and Ilardi (1997)

explicated that the level of felt authenticity can differ across social roles and contexts. Their results indicate that there is no absolute form of authenticity, but rather multiple versions that exist simultaneously (Harter, 2002). Therefore, we believe it is important to utilize a measure of state authenticity developed explicitly for a work context.

**Authenticity and work outcomes.** Unsurprisingly, some individuals that have established a fit between their genuine selves and their job or work environment seem to experience several favourable effects. There is empirical evidence that authenticity is associated with positive well-being at work (Menard & Brunet, 2011), and increased feelings of job satisfaction and work engagement (Metin et al., 2016; Van den Bosch & Taris, 2014).

Work engagement is an affective-cognitive state that ensues when one feels fulfilled at work. It is comprised of properties such as: vigour (i.e., resilience and energy), dedication (i.e., commitment and pride), and absorption (i.e., immersion in work) (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006). Additionally, we anticipated that acting more authentic would be connected to increased organizational citizenship behaviours (OCBs). OCBs are altruistic behaviours that extend beyond formal job requirements (e.g., voluntarily completing extra tasks, exemplary attendance) (Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983). Although research has found links between authentic leadership styles and increased follower OCB (Valsania, León, Alonso, & Cantisano, 2012), to our knowledge, no study has assessed the direct relationship between employee authenticity and OCB. In accordance with the above findings, we expected that those who reported higher levels of authenticity would score higher on job satisfaction, work engagement, and organizational citizenship behaviours, than those with lower felt authenticity.

*H<sub>1</sub>: Authenticity will be positively related to (a) positive work outcomes, (b) and negative outcomes*

### **The Dark Triad**

**Authenticity and the Dark Triad.** Far less attention has been paid to the potential liabilities of being authentic. Rogers (1961) posited that for individuals with undesirable personality traits acting authentically may actually be “releasing the beast within” (p.177, as cited in Womick, Foltz, & King, 2019). Therefore, it is foreseeable that authentic behaviour could actually have detrimental impacts when acted upon by these people. In particular, those who possess high levels of unfavourable personality traits will likely have different (malice) intentions and motivations (e.g., self-interest) than those with humanistic desires (e.g., group

achievement) (Womick et al., 2019). These motivations may manifest into negative work behaviours and outcomes. Specifically, the present study will examine the role of a subset of malevolent personality characteristics known as the Dark Triad (DT).

The Dark Triad encompasses three socially undesirable and aversive traits: Machiavellianism (i.e., exploitative, cynical), narcissism (i.e., vain), and psychopathy (i.e., impulsive, callous) (Spain & Harms, 2018). Individuals who score high on any of these three attributes may still be normally functioning, but with a heightened tendency to engage in egotistical, duplicitous, and exploitative behaviours (Jones & Paulhus, 2017). That is to say, the Dark Triad does not diagnose clinical levels of psychopathy or narcissism. Although studies have shown an interconnected relationship amongst the three, empirical evidence demonstrates that each trait is “sufficiently distinctive to warrant theoretical and empirical partitioning” (O’Boyle, Forsyth, Banks & McDaniel, 2012, p.557). Narcissists are marked by a sense of grandiosity and superiority, and frequently seek ego validation and gratification (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). Their sense of entitlement often leads them to believe that they are above usual standards or rules (O’Boyle, et al., 2012). On the surface, Machiavellians may appear to possess many advantageous skills: they are able to form powerful relationships and establish trust. But Machiavellians are skilled manipulators and act as “social chameleons” by responding and adapting situations in their favour (O’Boyle et al., 2012). Finally, non-clinical psychopathy is distinguished by detached affective states and antisocial behaviours (Paulhus & Williams, 2002).

First, we suspected that personality differences might influence which individuals choose to act authentically. In one recent study, Womick et al. (2019) found that the DT was (generally) negatively associated with authenticity. They suggested that their results indicate an obscure form of authenticity amongst those with dark traits. They posited that inauthenticity for those with Dark Triad dispositions could actually be a sincere representation of the self; where being deceitful and masking the true self is a genuine expression of who these people are. This may explain why those scoring highly on the DT received low scores on authenticity in their study. However, separate analysis of each trait revealed that there might be more subtle patterns of association. In their study, Machiavellians and psychopaths reported less authenticity (supporting their hypothesis), while narcissists tended to experience greater authenticity.

A conflicting theoretical explanation by Paulhus and Williams (2002) demonstrates that the relationship between authenticity and the Dark Triad may be more complicated than

described. They propose that narcissists tend to exhibit more self-enhancement practices (i.e., self-deception), while Machiavellians appear to be more reality-focused. If this reasoning is correct, then Machiavellianism should actually be positively correlated with authenticity. As such, we questioned whether “dark” individuals would report greater authenticity since they are motivated to behave in a way that serves their self-interests, regardless of the consequences for others. These contradictory explanations illustrate that there is theoretical ambiguity regarding the relationship between authenticity and the Dark Triad. Therefore, one objective of the present study was to clarify and provide further empirical support for the relationship between the Dark Triad (DT) and workplace authenticity. We hypothesized that high levels of DT would accompany high authenticity scores.

*H<sub>2</sub>: Authenticity is positively related to the Dark Triad*

**Dark Triad and work outcomes.** Unsurprisingly, DT traits have been associated with the undermining of organizational functioning (Spain, Harms, & LeBreton, 2014). A frequent association has been drawn between the Dark Triad and counterproductive work behaviour (CWB) (Cohen, 2016). CWBs are intentional employee behaviours that act against the interests of an organization such as: using company resources inappropriately, incivility, and absenteeism (Spain & Harms, 2018). Cohen, Panter, Turan, Morse, and Kim (2014) discovered a positive relationship between Machiavellianism and CWBs. Those who were more manipulative also reported committing more counterproductive work behaviours, and recounted less engagement in OCBs. Particularly, Machiavellianism, psychopathy, and narcissism have been consistently linked with decreases in job performance (O’Boyle et al., 2012) and more theft behaviours (Gruys & Sackett, 2003).

Underlying the Dark Triad traits is the ruthless pursuit of individual success, often at the expense of others. These individuals are often willing to violate norms of reciprocity in relationships, and consequently should be more likely to experience interpersonal conflict. Rauthmann’s (2012) study found a variety of social consequences associated with the Dark Triad. Psychopaths received the highest negative ratings from others, while narcissists were not rated favourably or unfavourably during brief interactions. Interestingly, Machiavellians actually reported significant negative views of their teams (Rauthmann, 2012). In our study, we expected that high scores on any of the DT traits would be associated with more CWBs, less engagement in OCBs, and greater interpersonal conflict.

Comparatively, the literature exploring the potential positive consequences of DT is inconsistent and limited. Some authors report less job satisfaction (LeBreton, Shiverdecker, & Grimaldi, 2018), while others reported more job satisfaction amongst Dark Triad individuals (Jonason, Wee, & Li, 2015). We anticipated that participants high on one or more of the DT traits would experience benefits such as greater job satisfaction and work engagement, because they are specifically cultivating situations for their benefit.

*H<sub>3</sub>: The Dark Triad will be (a) positively related to counterproductive work behaviour and (b) positively related to some positive work outcomes (job satisfaction, work engagement)*

### **Job Crafting**

The final tenet of our model addresses how employees might achieve authenticity at work. We propose that there is a relationship between job crafting, authenticity, the Dark Triad personality traits, and the type of work behaviours exhibited. The concept of job crafting was first presented and defined by Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) as the “physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work” (p.179). Since its introduction, the concept of job crafting has gained prolific interest, which has prompted a broader, more inclusive categorization of job crafting behaviours. Specifically, job crafting refers to any proactive efforts made by an employee to alter their tasks and conditions, or reframe perceptions of their job. Using the Job Demands-Resource framework, Tims and Bakker (2010) specify that employees can engage in crafting in three ways: by increasing job resources (e.g., colleague support), increasing challenge demands (e.g., volunteering for extra responsibilities), or decreasing hindering demands (e.g., avoiding or unloading tasks onto others).

**Job crafting and work outcomes.** In a similar way that acting authentically can cultivate positive outcomes, job crafting can provide opportunities to re-design work conditions to stimulate optimal functioning. Job crafting has been associated with increased job satisfaction, work engagement, job performance (Rudolph, Katz, Lavigne, & Zacher, 2017), and decreased burnout (Tims, Bakker, & Derks, 2013). Furthermore, organizational citizenship behaviours illustrate a virtuous dimension of job crafting: by increasing challenge demands one takes on additional tasks that assist colleagues or the organization (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

Nevertheless, it is imperative that we are cautious when drawing conclusions about the influences of job crafting and authenticity. One implicit assumption that has emerged from a collection of studies is that job crafting is always a good thing. However, most empirical



research has only focused on its relationship with individual job attitudes and performance, rather than the impact on group or organizational functioning. Current studies have largely ignored the role and potential influence of self-interest (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001; Wrzesniewski, LoBuglio, Dutton & Berg, 2013). Therefore, it is conceivable that one's motivation for self-enhancement, to improve his or her work experience, or to achieve personal goals may harm the organization or colleagues.

Tims, Bakker, and Derks (2015) investigated the possible negative interpersonal interactions between a job crafter and colleague. They found that when an individual engaged in job crafting, by decreasing hindering demands, it resulted in increased workload and exhaustion for their colleague. Consequently, both the crafter and colleague reported higher levels of conflict with each other. Unsurprisingly, when one employee makes efforts to make their job less demanding, by unloading tasks onto others, this can elicit negative reactions because of the impact it has on someone else's experience. A diary study by Demerouti, Bakker, and Halbesleben (2015) found that reducing demands resulted in decreased workload, engagement and daily task performance for workers. Remarkably, on days where employees pursued additional tasks (i.e., seeking challenges) they also showed more counterproductive behaviour. It is possible that after undertaking additional tasks employees felt they were entitled to counterproductive behaviours like taking longer breaks or exaggerating their work hours. Altogether, these studies support the notion that job crafting can be used for both productive and dysfunctional purposes. The present study will examine whether the same pattern of results occurs amongst those who possess malevolent personality characteristics.

*H4: Job crafting will be positively related to both (a) positive outcomes and (b) negative work outcomes*

**Job crafting and authenticity.** One motivation of job crafting is “to cultivate a positive sense of meaning and identity in work over time” (Wrzesniewski et al., 2013, p.287). Several studies have reported a positive relationship between job crafting and authenticity (den Hartog, 2017). When creating their work identity, individuals can customize their tasks and interactions to create a better person-job fit. By aligning their job tasks, personal preferences, and abilities individuals can construct work conditions that are reflective of their genuine self (Tims & Bakker, 2010). This reasoning suggests that job crafting may be a tool to attain and enhance workplace authenticity. For example, we expected that someone who reported less felt

authenticity would engage in more job crafting behaviours to reconfigure his or her work to be compatible with personal preferences or capabilities. Moreover, we expected authenticity to have a mediating effect on the relationship between job crafting behaviours and workplace conduct and outcomes. When crafting their job, individuals may experience a better person-job fit. This match may foster increased feelings of authenticity, which in turn can lead to a variety of work outcomes (counterproductive or pro-organizational). Our model supports the above propositions by depicting a direct relationship between job crafting and authenticity, as well as a mediating relationship where authenticity transpires in the relationship between job crafting and work behaviours.

*H<sub>5</sub>: Job crafting will be positively related to authenticity*

*H<sub>6</sub>: Authenticity mediates the relationship between job crafting and workplace outcomes*

**Dark Triad and job crafting.** Since job crafting entails self-initiated behaviours it is likely that job crafting may be appealing to those with selfish predispositions. As such, we predicted that possessing high levels of Dark Triad traits could directly affect an individual's propensity to engage in crafting behaviours that support their personal interests. A study by Roczniewska and Bakker (2016) supports the notion that job crafting behaviour is associated with the Dark Triad. Namely, narcissism was related to seeking more social job resources, seeking more challenge, and reducing job demands. Alternatively, psychopathy was correlated with seeking less social resources. Interestingly, Roczniewska and Bakker (2016) did not find Machiavellianism as a significant predictor of any job crafting behaviours, but their pattern of results indicated that Machiavellianism could be linked with reducing job demands. Interestingly, Tims, Bakker, and Derks (2012) found an association between decreasing hindering demands and cynicism. Since Machiavellians are known for their cynical nature, it is plausible we will uncover an association between Machiavellianism and decreasing job demands. The present study attempted to replicate the pattern of these results by using a larger, more diverse employment sample.

*H<sub>7</sub>: Generally, the Dark Triad traits will be positively related to job crafting.*

### **Moderation Effects**

Finally, we suspected that authenticity and job crafting would be especially problematic amongst individuals with self-serving inclinations, such as those scoring highly on the Dark Triad instrument. Particularly, we postulated that these individuals would craft their jobs to align

with their own interests (i.e., achieve authenticity), which may facilitate negative organizational outcomes. Finally, we anticipated that those with dark traits would use job crafting as an exploitative strategy to attain egotistical goals, and to intentionally act against the interests of an organization (Spain & Harms, 2018). Consequently, employing job crafting in such a way should result in more counterproductive work behaviours. Harms and Spain (2015) stated that the effects of dark personalities are more noticeable in workplaces with high autonomy. Having independence or job control allows individuals to craft their desired job. Baka (2018) found that higher levels of job control strengthened the relationship between the Dark Triad and CWB. Thus, it appears that opportunities arising from high job control (i.e., job crafting) may give employees with dark traits the freedom to engage in negative workplace behaviours.

Our study investigated whether the Dark Triad can influence organizational outcomes through its influence on workplace authenticity and job crafting behaviours. We hypothesized that the presence of DT traits will reverse the (typically) positive relationship between job crafting (mediated by authenticity) and organizational outcomes, so that the positive effects of authenticity and job crafting will disappear amongst those scoring high on the Dark Triad.

*H<sub>8</sub>: The Dark Triad moderates the mediated relationship between job crafting and work outcomes*

While previous studies have identified some speculative connections between authenticity, job crafting behaviour, the Dark Triad, and counterproductive work behaviour, there are currently no studies that have assessed all factors simultaneously. In fact, the dearth of literature in this domain has left several relationships unclear. As such, the present study will measure all four variables concurrently to explore the possible “dark side” of authenticity. There are two main objectives of this study. First, to identify whether there are circumstances where authenticity is associated with destructive work behaviours and outcomes. Specifically, we aimed to clarify how authenticity is manifested amongst those with undesirable personality characteristics. Second, we wanted to uncover the role of job crafting in its relationship with authenticity such as: whether job crafting leads to positive outcomes through increased authenticity, and whether job crafting can be a strategic mechanism achieve counterproductive work behaviour.

## **Method**

### **Participants and Procedure**

Participants were recruited via social media posts on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Reddit, as well as through personal email invitation. The recruitment post contained a link to the questionnaire, the purpose of the study, and the assurance of anonymity. Clicking the link directed participants to an online survey administered by Qualtrics. Participants read and acknowledged their compliance with the informed consent by clicking “I voluntarily consent to participate”.

The study’s sample originally consisted of 241 participants. However, those with more than 5 scale items unanswered were automatically removed. Furthermore, we had concerns that anonymous online surveys would permit careless responding, especially when a reward is offered. Based on Meade and Craig’s (2012) suggestion we included three control items designed to detect inattentive responses. For instance, participants were instructed to “please respond with a two for this item”. Data were discarded for anyone who responded incorrectly to more than one of these items.

This left a remaining sample of 172 participants (121 female, 51 male). The participants’ age ranged from 17 to 66 years old ( $M = 31.05$ ,  $SD = 11.75$ ). The majority of participants were Canadian (48%), followed by American (13%), Dutch (8%), and British (8%). The remaining population represented a variety of other nationalities. Over 84% of participants had completed higher education programs (i.e., post-secondary or above). We also collected employment specific information such as work experience and typical weekly hours. Tenure in their current position ranged from 0-31 years ( $M = 3.98$ ,  $SD = 5.93$ ). Most participants indicated that they typically work 32-40 hours per week (36%); followed by 40+ hours (34%). Only about 10% of our sample worked less than 16 hours weekly. After completion, each participant was offered the opportunity to enter a lottery to win one of two 10€ gift cards to Amazon.

## **Materials**

The following variables were assessed through an online survey on Qualtrics. To prevent order-effects, the presentation of authenticity, Dark Triad, and job crafting questionnaires were counterbalanced. The descriptive statistics and reliabilities for the study variables are displayed in Table 1.

**Authenticity.** Authenticity dimensions were measured using the shortened IAM Work questionnaire (Van den Bosch & Taris, 2014). Participants rated the extent that 12 characteristics do or do not apply to them on a 1 (“*does not describe me at all*”) to 7 (“*describes me very well*”)

scale. Respondents were asked to reflect on their most recent work situation, by recalling their behaviour within the past four weeks. For example, one item representing authentic living was “at work, I always stand by what I believe in”. We aggregated participant scores across all dimensions to derive a total authenticity score; higher mean scores indicated greater felt authenticity. This instrument was chosen because the questions were deliberately designed to assess authenticity as a role specific trait, specifically in the context of organizational psychology.

**Job crafting.** To evaluate job crafting behaviour participants answered a shortened 13-item version of the *Job Crafting Scale* (JCS; Tims et al., 2012) (modified by Petrou, Demerouti, Peeters, Schaufeli, & Hetland, 2012). This questionnaire assessed three different job crafting dimensions: seeking job resources (e.g., “I ask colleagues for advice”), increasing challenging job demands (e.g., “I ask for more responsibilities”), and reducing hindering job demands (e.g., “I try to ensure that my work is mentally less intense”). Participants answered how frequently they engage in these work related behaviours according to a 1 (“*never*”) to a 5 (“*often*”) scale.

We conducted an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with an oblique rotation to assess whether job crafting should be examined as a three-dimension solution or whether we could calculate a total job crafting score. Both the Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) measure (.738), and Bartlett’s test of sphericity ( $\chi^2 = 731.81$ ,  $df = 78$ ,  $p = .000$ ) verified sampling adequacy for further analysis. The factor loadings and scree plot indicated that three factors should be extracted. The first three factors had eigenvalues of 3.41, 2.46, 1.77 and accounted for 26.23%, 18.91%, and 13.60% of the total variance in the JCS scale, respectively. The pattern of factor loadings corresponded with Tims et al.’s (2012) conceptualization. As such, we scored and analyzed each of the three dimensions separately as specified in the JCS.

**Dark Triad.** The *Short Dark Triad* scale (SD3; Jones & Paulhus, 2014) is a 27-item measure that gauges an individual’s level of narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy. Each component was measured with nine different questions. Sample items include: “There are things you should hide from other people to preserve your reputation” (Machiavellianism); “People see me as a natural leader” (narcissism); “I like to get revenge on authorities” (psychopathy). Participants rated the extent that they agreed with each statement on a 1 (“*Disagree strongly*”) to 5 (“*Agree strongly*”) scale. This instrument was chosen because of its superior reliability and construct validity (Jones & Paulhus, 2014).

An EFA was conducted on the *SD3 scale*. The KMO measure (.785) and Bartlett's test of sphericity ( $\chi^2 = 1363.44$ ,  $df = 351$ ,  $p = .000$ ) confirmed sampling adequacy. The scree plot and factor loadings revealed that two factors adequately explained the data. Machiavellian and psychopathy items predominantly loaded onto the first factor (5.69), and accounted for 21% variance. The second factor (2.79) captured an additional 10% variance and was almost entirely composed of items assessing narcissism. As such, we calculated mean scores for two DT dimensions: a combined Machiavellianism-Psychopathy (MachPsych) variable, and narcissism.

**Work outcomes.** Several scales were utilized to assess both positive (i.e., work engagement, job satisfaction, OCB) and negative (i.e., interpersonal conflict, CWB) work-related behaviours. A 19-item scale adapted by Kelloway, Loughlin, Barling, and Nault (2002) asked respondents to indicate the frequency they have engaged in 10 different *counterproductive behaviours* (e.g., "gossiped about your coworkers"). This assessment also includes nine questions that address *organizational citizenship behaviours* (e.g., "Volunteering to do things not formally required by the job"). Both questionnaires were answered using a 5-point Likert scale.

The 9-item *Utrecht Work Engagement Scale* (UWES-9; Schaufeli et al., 2006) was a supplementary measure of positive work behaviour. The scale asked questions pertaining to how someone feels about their job (e.g., I am immersed in my work). Each statement was rated on a 1 ("Never") to 7 ("Always") Likert scale. Participants also completed the 4-item *Interpersonal Conflict at Work Scale* (ICAWS; Spector & Jex, 1998), which measures the frequency that an individual experiences conflict at their current job. For example, participants responded 1 ("Never") to 5 ("Very often") on "how often do you get into arguments with others at work?" Finally, *job satisfaction* was measured by asking respondents to rate how satisfied they are with their current job from 1 ("Extremely dissatisfied") to 5 ("Extremely satisfied").

Table 1

*Descriptive Statistics and Reliabilities of Study Variables*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range	$\alpha$
<i>Demographics</i>				
Age	31.05	11.75	17-66	
Sex				
Nationality				
Education Level				
Work Experience	3.98	5.93	0-31	
Weekly Hours			0-40+	
Authenticity	57.92	10.80	33-83	.84
<i>Dark Triad Traits</i>				
MachPsych	43.37	9.21	20-69	.82
Narcissism	25.23	5.12	12-39	.72
<i>Job Crafting</i>				
Seeking Resources	24.18	3.69	11-30	.76
Seeking Challenges	10.62	3.01	3-15	.84
Reducing Demands	11.65	3.42	4-20	.77
<i>Work Outcomes</i>				
Work Engagement	42.99	10.47	14-62	.93
OCB	35.77	5.78	21-45	.79
Job Satisfaction	3.57	1.23	1-5	
CWB	19.42	6.22	10-37	.83
Interpersonal Conflict	6.78	2.39	4-14	.70

*Note.*  $\alpha$  = Cronbach's alpha. Sex, nationality, education level, and weekly hours are categorical variables with no mean or *SD*.

### Statistical Analysis

Prior to analysis, assumptions regarding linearity and homoscedasticity were assessed by visually inspecting scatterplots. A non-significant Little's Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) test showed there was no pattern of missing values ( $\chi^2 = 843.12$ ,  $df = 790$ ,  $p = .09$ ). Data were checked for multivariate outliers using Cook's distance statistic; all values fell within an acceptable range, with no cases with values above one. Additionally, we checked for an absence of multicollinearity amongst variables by ensuring that all tolerance values were above 0.1. Finally, tests of normality were conducted using the standardized residuals. A significant Shapiro-Wilk's test statistic indicated that many distributions violated the assumption of normality. However, the central limit theorem presupposes that multiple regression is relatively

robust to the assumption of normality when the sample size is sufficiently large (Williams, Grajales, & Kurkiewicz, 2013). Consequently, data transformations were not conducted.

The substantive hypotheses of the present research were examined using (partial) correlation analyses and multiple regression analyses. We used hierarchical regressions to analyze the relationships between several predictor variables and the criterion variable (i.e., work outcome). For each outcome we entered predictors in the following blocks: 1) demographic variables, 2) authenticity, 3) job crafting, 4) DT 5) interaction effects. Interaction terms represent the standardized product of the two predictors in question. We utilized hierarchical regression because it allowed us to examine the unique variance accounted for by each added predictor. We also questioned whether authenticity could be an underlying variable that explains how job crafting and the DT relate to various work outcomes. Following Frazier, Tix, and Barron (2004), we used multiple regressions to test for mediator effects. We examined direct and indirect regression paths according to the four assumptions outlined in Baron and Kenny's (1986) causal steps approach. Only relationships that fulfilled all assumptions were reported in Tables 7 and 8.

### **Results**

Partial correlations highlighted the relationships between various work outcomes, feelings of authenticity, job crafting behaviours, and DT traits, while controlling for the influence of all demographic information (Table 2). We controlled the effects of these characteristics since we anticipated that individual differences like cultural norms (i.e., nationality), and job familiarity (i.e., work experience, weekly hours) would impact one's propensity for authenticity and job crafting. It can be seen that not all correlations were in the expected direction (e.g., MachPsych and authenticity correlating negatively). Moreover, there were several significant partial correlations that were not significant as predictors in the regression analysis (e.g., reducing demands and CWB, and MachPsych and all positive outcomes). It is possible these effects disappeared in regression because their unique contribution was already accounted for by a previously entered variable.



## DARK SIDE OF AUTHENTICITY

Table 2

*Partial Correlations Between Study Variables*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
<i>Control Variables</i>																	
1. Age	-																
2. Sex	-.11	-															
3. Nationality	-.19	.04	-														
4. Education Level	.12	.08	.32	-													
5. Work Experience	.66	-.06	-.16	.07	-												
6. Weekly Hours	.20	-.06	-.16	.15	.07	-											
<i>Authenticity</i>																	
7. Authenticity	.35	-.03	-.17	-.004	.25	.04	-										
<i>Dark Triad Traits</i>																	
8. MachPsych	-.16	-.28	.08	.02	-.09	-.07	-.27	-									
9. Narcissism	.02	-.06	-.09	.05	-.07	.02	.23	.33	-								
<i>Job Crafting</i>																	
10. Seek Resources	-.26	.17	-.07	.03	-.31	.05	.15	-.24	.03	-							
11. Seek Challenges	-.10	.14	-.11	-.03	-.13	.05	.22	-.02	.19	.29	-						
12. Reduce Demands	-.09	.02	-.01	-.07	-.05	-.15	-.18	.21	.02	.01	-.05	-					
<i>Work Outcomes</i>																	
13. Work Engagement	.24	.07	-.16	.03	.24	.12	.44	-.25	.16	.32	.18	-.11	-				
14. OCB	.10	.11	-.08	-.01	.06	.12	.33	-.27	.09	.43	.49	-.11	.36	-			
15. Job Satisfaction	.19	.09	-.09	.07	.18	.09	.45	-.16	.15	.11	.06	-.19	.65	.28	-		
16. CWB	-.32	-.06	.08	-.11	-.18	-.10	-.37	.47	.16	-.19	-.08	.28	-.29	-.32	-.22	-	
17. Interpersonal Conflict	-.02	-.23	.01	-.04	-.07	-.11	-.19	.26	.20	-.02	.03	.12	-.26	-.01	-.27	.29	-

Note: Correlations of .22 are significant at  $p \leq .005$ , correlations of .15 are significant at  $p \leq .05$ .

## Multiple Regressions

**Testing the proposed model.** Tables 3 and 4 present the standardized coefficients for each predictor regressed against each work outcome separately, excluding the interaction effect block. All interaction terms were non-significant predictors across all regression models, and thus not reported ( $p > .05$ ). Accordingly, we reject hypothesis 8, which postulated that the relationship between job crafting and work outcomes would differ if one has Dark Triad attributes. Regression models revealed that the demographic variables ( $R^2_{\text{adj}}$  ranging from .02 to .06) accounted for only limited variance in each work outcome (Tables 3 and 4).

Importantly, all models accounted for significantly more variance in the outcome variables when authenticity was added as predictor ( $R^2_{\text{adj}}$  ranging from .05 to .24). Specifically, we found that authenticity had a significant positive association with *work engagement* ( $\beta = .40$ ) and *OCB* ( $\beta = .21$ ), and was the only significant predictor in the *job satisfaction* model ( $\beta = .49$ ). Together, these results support  $H_{1a}$  that individuals who feel more authentic tend to experience positive work outcomes. Supporting our central proposition ( $H_{1b}$ ), authenticity was also a significant negative predictor of *CWB* ( $\beta = -.29$ ) and *interpersonal conflict* ( $\beta = -.21$ ). To uncover which factors predict felt authenticity we conducted an additional regression. First, we regressed the demographic characteristics, and then added all job crafting actions and DT traits as predictors of authenticity (Table 5). Examination of the individual coefficients revealed partial support for  $H_2$ ; both DT traits were significant predictors of authenticity. But contrary to  $H_2$ , we found MachPsych negatively ( $\beta = -.33$ ), and narcissism ( $\beta = .30$ ) positively associated with authenticity. Unexpectedly, no other central study variables were significant predictors of an individual's level of felt authenticity. Thus hypothesis 5 could not be supported since there was no positive association between job crafting and authenticity.

In regard to  $H_{3a}$ , some of the Dark Triad traits were significant predictors of CWB and interpersonal conflict. Despite MachPsych being the only significant DT predictor of CWB ( $\beta = .29$ ), narcissism did show the expected direction of association ( $r = .16$ ). In fact, adding the MachPsych variable to the CWB model accounted for a significant increase in variance ( $R^2_{\text{adj}}$  from .26 to .36). However, we did not find evidence to support  $H_{3b}$  that any of the DT traits were predictors of positive work outcomes ( $p > .05$ ).

DARK SIDE OF AUTHENTICITY

Table 3

*Demographics, Authenticity, Job Crafting, and DT as Predictors of Positive Work Outcomes*

Predictor	Work Engagement			OCB			Job Satisfaction	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3 <sup>a</sup>	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3 <sup>b</sup>	Model 1	Model 2 <sup>c</sup>
<i>Step 1: Demographics</i>								
Age	.14	-.003	.05	.05	-.05	.05	.11	-.04
Education Level	.01	.02	-.001	-.03	-.02	-.05	.07	.08
Male	-.10	-.08	-.04	-.16*	-.15*	-.05	-.11	-.09
Canadian	-.02	-.08	-.10	.32**	.27*	.19*	.11	.04
Dutch	.10	.01	.01	.17*	.10	.07	.07	-.03
American	-.11	-.09	-.05	.14	.15	.19*	.07	.09
British	-.10	-.13	-.13	.26**	.24**	.21**	-.02	-.05
Weekly Hours	.10	.10	.07	.10	.10	.05	.05	.05
Work Experience	.15	.14	.21*	-.04	-.04	.09	.09	.07
<i>Step 2: Authenticity</i>								
Authenticity		.45**	.40**		.33**	.21**		.49**
<i>Step 3: Job Crafting</i>								
Seeking Resources			.26**			.34**		
Seeking Challenges			.03			.32**		
Reducing Demands			-.05			-.04		
$R^2$	.11	.29	.35	.11	.20	.44	.07	.27
$\Delta R^2$		.17**	.06**		.09**	.24**		.20**

*Note:* Effects are standardized beta coefficients. Only the preceding and last significant models are reported. Model 4 (with DT traits) and Model 5 (with interaction effects) were non-significant for all outcomes.

<sup>a</sup> $F(13, 151) = 6.17, p = .000.$

<sup>b</sup> $F(13, 151) = 9.13, p = .000.$

<sup>c</sup> $F(10, 154) = 5.56, p = .000.$

\*\* $p \leq .005.$  \* $p \leq .05.$

Table 4

*Demographics, Authenticity, Job Crafting, and DT as Predictors of Negative Work Outcomes*

Predictor	Counterproductive Behaviour				Interpersonal Conflict			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4 <sup>a</sup>	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4 <sup>b</sup>
<i>Step 1: Demographics</i>								
Age	-.34**	-.23*	-.26*	-.22*	.05	.11	.11	.14
Education Level	-.08	-.09	-.07	-.10	.001	-.003	.002	-.03
Male	.10	.09	.07	-.02	.23**	.22**	.23**	.15
Canadian	-.12	-.07	-.06	-.02	.06	.08	.08	.11
Dutch	-.17*	-.10	-.08	-.01	.05	.09	.10	.15
American	-.10	-.12	-.12	-.06	.03	.02	.03	.09
British	-.03	-.01	.01	.04	.05	.06	.07	.10
Weekly Hours	-.04	-.04	.002	.02	-.12	-.13	-.11	-.10
Work Experience	.07	.08	.04	.06	-.11	-.10	-.10	-.07
<i>Step 2: Authenticity</i>								
Authenticity		-.37**	-.32**	-.29**		-.21*	-.21*	-.21*
<i>Step 3: Job Crafting</i>								
Seeking Resources			-.19*	-.13			-.02	.05
Seeking Challenges			.06	.001			.06	.01
Reducing Demands			.20**	.16*			.10	.07
<i>Step 4: Dark Triad</i>								
MachPsych				.29**				.20*
Narcissism				.12				.17*
$R^2$	.15	.26	.32	.41	.08	.11	.13	.20
$\Delta R^2$		.11**	.06**	.09**		.04*	.01	.07**

Note: Effects are standardized beta coefficients. Only the preceding and last significant models are reported. Model 5 (with interaction effects) was non-significant.

<sup>a</sup> $F(15, 149) = 6.90, p = .000$ .

<sup>b</sup> $F(15, 149) = 2.47, p = .003$ .

\*\* $p \leq .005$ . \* $p \leq .05$ .

## DARK SIDE OF AUTHENTICITY

Table 5

*Demographics, Dark Triad, and Job Crafting as Predictors of Authenticity*

Predictor	Authenticity	
	Model 1	Model 2 <sup>a</sup>
<i>Step 1: Demographic Variables</i>		
Age	.31**	.22*
Education Level	-.02	-.02
Male	-.03	.07
Canadian	.14	-.02
Dutch	.20*	.09
American	-.03	-.08
British	.07	-.02
Weekly Hours	-.01	-.07
Work Experience	.03	.11
<i>Step 2:</i>		
Narcissism		.30**
MachPsych		-.33**
Reducing Demands		-.11
Seeking Challenges		.13
Seeking Resources		.01
$R^2$	.17**	.30
$\Delta R^2$		.13

Note: Effects are standardized beta coefficients.

<sup>a</sup> $F(14, 152) = 5.30, p = .000$ .

\*\* $p \leq .005$ . \* $p \leq .05$ .

When examining job crafting as predictors for *work engagement* we found a significant positive association with seeking resources ( $\beta = .26$ ), indicating that employees who pursued more work resources tended to be more engaged or immersed in their work (Table 3). Similarly, a greater tendency to craft jobs by seeking resources ( $\beta = .34$ ) and challenges ( $\beta = .32$ ) were significant predictors of increased OCB at work. Generally, with the exception of *job satisfaction*, these results uphold  $H_{4a}$ . Furthermore,  $H_{4b}$  was only partially supported. We found reducing demands associated with greater *CWB* ( $\beta = .16$ ); unexpectedly, we found no evidence that any job crafting behaviours were significant predictors of job satisfaction or interpersonal conflict at work.

We theorized that individuals scoring high on the Dark Triad ( $H_7$ ) would engage in more job crafting behaviour. We conducted another regression analysis by entering each job crafting dimension as the criterion variable (Table 6). Hypothesis 7 stated that the DT traits would be

positively related to job crafting; however, MachPsych was the only significant (negative) predictor of seeking resources ( $\beta = -.31$ ). Evidently, individuals who scored highly on the MachPsych characteristic reportedly engaged in less resource seeking at work, which was actually contrary to our expectation. Furthermore, narcissism was significantly positively associated with seeking challenges ( $\beta = .21$ ). The overall regression model for reducing demands was non-significant, indicating that none of the predictors accounted for a substantial amount of variance. As such,  $H_7$  was not supported.

**Mediating role of authenticity.** We analyzed two different mediation models (Figures 2 and 3) because we suspected that antecedents like job crafting and the Dark Triad impact one's level of authenticity, which in turn impacts the resulting work outcome. In accordance with  $H_6$ , we found evidence of several partial mediations. Results showed that authenticity partially mediated the relationship between MachPsych and CWB ( $\beta = .40$ ), between MachPsych and interpersonal conflict ( $\beta = .28$ ), and between narcissism and interpersonal conflict ( $\beta = .26$ ) (Table 7).

In our model examining job crafting (Table 8) we found a significant association between seeking challenges and OCB ( $\beta = .48$ ); after including authenticity as a mediator, this association decreased ( $\beta = .44$ ). Both the effects of authenticity on OCB ( $\beta = .34$ ) and seeking challenges were significant ( $\beta = .17$ ). Similarly, we found that the relationship between reducing demands and CWB ( $\beta = .29$ ) decreased when authenticity was entered as a mediator ( $\beta = .22$ ), revealing a partial mediation. However, we found no evidence of mediation for the remaining associations. Overall, this analysis indicates that authenticity plays a role in the relationships between job crafting, the Dark Triad and various work outcomes.

Table 6

*Demographics and Dark Triad as Predictors of Job Crafting*

Predictor	Seeking Resources		Seeking Challenges		Reducing Demands	
	Model 1	Model 2 <sup>a</sup>	Model 1	Model 2 <sup>b</sup>	Model 1	Model 2 <sup>c</sup>
<i>Step 1:</i>						
<i>Demographics</i>						
Age	-.14	-.21*	-.05	-.08	-.05	.003
Education Level	.08	.09	.001	-.01	-.02	-.03
Male	-.16*	-.06	-.18*	-.17*	.02	-.06
Canadian	.09	.05	.23*	.22*	-.07	-.04
Dutch	.05	-.05	.13	.10	-.10	-.03
American	-.16*	-.19*	.00	.01	-.11	-.08
British	-.01	-.02	.10	.11	-.11	-.09
Weekly Hours Work	.08	.05	.05	.05	-.15	-.13
Experience	-.25*	-.22*	-.15	-.11	-.002	-.02
<i>Step 2:</i>						
Narcissism		.12		.21**		-.06
MachPsych		-.31**		-.07		.23*
$R^2$	.17	.24	.09	.12	.05	.09
$\Delta R^2$		.06**		.04*		.04*

Note: Effects are standardized beta coefficients.

<sup>a</sup> $F(11, 156) = 4.45, p = .000.$

<sup>b</sup> $F(11, 157) = 2.01, p = .03.$

<sup>c</sup> $F(11, 155) = 1.33, p = .22.$

\*\* $p \leq .005.$  \* $p \leq .05$

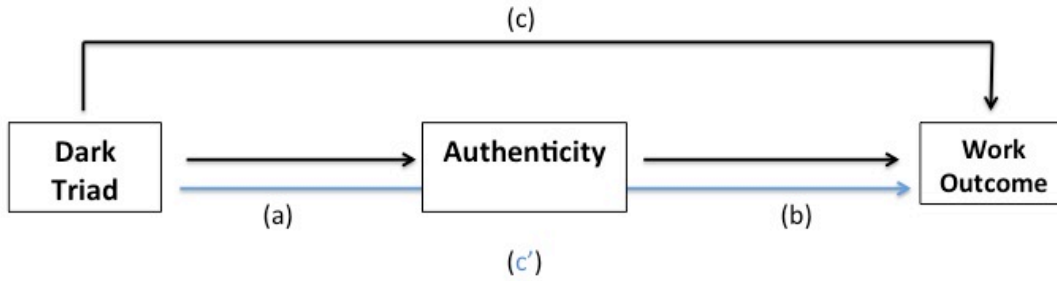


Figure 2. Authenticity as a mediator between the Dark Triad and work outcomes.

Table 7

*Authenticity as a Mediator in the Relationship Between Dark Triad and Work Outcomes*

	MachPsych & CWB	MachPsych & ICAWS	Narcissism & ICAWS
Direct Effect: Path (a)	-.30**	-.30**	.22*
Direct Effect: Path (b)	-.43**	-.18*	-.18*
Total Effect: Path (c)	.49**	.31**	.21*
Indirect Effect: Path (c')	.40**	.28**	.26**

Note: Effects are standardized beta coefficients. Only relationships where all paths were significant are reported.

\*\* $p \leq .005$ . \* $p \leq .05$ .



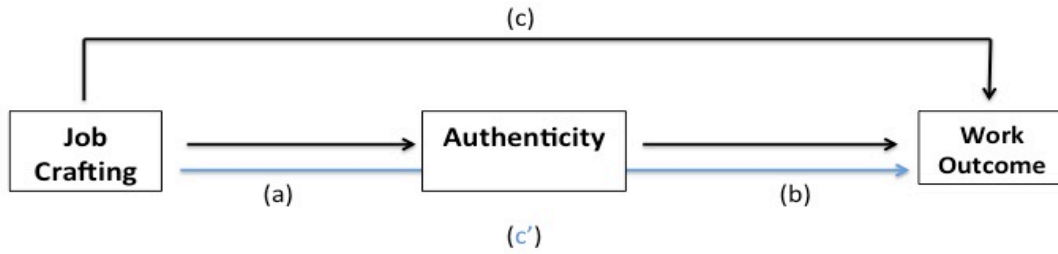


Figure 3. Authenticity as a mediator between job crafting and work outcomes.

Table 8

*Authenticity as the Mediator in the Relationship Between Job Crafting and Work Outcomes*

	Seeking Challenges & OCB	Reducing Demands & CWB
Direct Effect: Path (a)	.17*	-.18*
Direct Effect: Path (b)	.34**	-.43**
Total Effect: Path (c)	.48**	.29**
Indirect Effect: Path (c')	.44**	.22**

Note: Effects are standardized beta coefficients. Only relationships where all paths were significant are reported.

\*\* $p \leq .005$ . \*  $p \leq .05$ .

## **Discussion**

The primary objective of this study was to examine whether there are circumstances in which workplace authenticity may have negative consequences. We were intrigued in the premise of the “dark side” of authenticity because acting authentically requires one to prioritize their own needs above those of others. Particularly, we investigated whether individuals with aversive personality traits were more inclined to act authentically, and whether their behaviour resulted in more negative workplace outcomes. As well, many studies have found associations between authenticity and job crafting behaviours, but we wanted to corroborate whether job crafting is a mechanism that enables employees to act authentically at work, and how callous individuals use this tool.

### **Authenticity**

First, our findings support the benefits highlighted in existing literature. We found that elevated levels of authenticity were associated with increased feelings of job satisfaction and work engagement, a result consistent with Metin et al., (2016) and Van den Bosch and Taris (2014). Additionally, we contribute a novel discovery: that high felt authenticity was associated with increased participation in OCBs. These results endorse the pre-conceived notion that authenticity has a beneficial impact. Interestingly, our results illustrate that an individual’s level of authenticity can have adverse organizational-level effects. Specifically, we found a negative association between authenticity and counterproductive behaviours (CWB) and interpersonal conflict. These results indicate that having low authenticity can actually have harmful impacts on an organization. For example, individuals who are unable to act in accord with their genuine selves may be dissatisfied or uninterested in their jobs, and as such engage in destructive behaviour like gossiping, or taking extra breaks to make their job more enjoyable. Being in a role that does not construe one’s true self may be frustrating, and as a result these individuals may be easily provoked and thus report more conflict with others.

### **Dark Triad**

Our study was one the first to incorporate personality characteristics when examining the organizational consequences that authenticity may have. We included the Dark Triad characteristics, which are categorized by non-clinical manipulative, callous, and self-serving inclinations; high scores on the DT continuum can still allow normal day-to-day functioning. As anticipated, MachPsych and narcissism were positively linked. However, each attribute exhibited

different patterns of associations with the other study variables, indicating they share an underlying feature, but are distinct enough to warrant separate analysis. Our results support our decision, and the recommendations of others (O'Boyle et al., 2012), to differentiate and analyze the Dark Triad traits individually. This allowed us to examine their independent contributions, and to uncover the subtle differences and motivations amongst different personality types (Paulhus & Williams, 2002).

We expected that those with DT dispositions would report high authenticity scores. These individuals are often fixated on their own needs and interests, and authenticity requires individuals to focus on *their* preferences and capabilities. Contrary to our prediction, we found high levels of narcissism and low levels of MachPsych associated with greater felt authenticity, results that were consistent with Womick et al. (2019). One motive of our study was to clarify and simplify the association between the Dark Triad and authenticity, but in a population that thrives on deception it is difficult to discern whether their responses were genuine or not. Regardless, one simple explanation for a lack of authenticity amongst Machiavellian-psychopaths could be that they lack an inherent trait that is necessary to achieve workplace authenticity. Daniel (1998) stated that mutual vulnerability might be an essential antecedent for authenticity; where individuals are required to be open and defenseless in their interactions. Consequently, it is conceivable that someone who is socially aloof may struggle or refuse to make him or herself vulnerable.

The notion of modifying or regulating one's public presentation (i.e., self-monitoring) may provide an alternative explanation for low authenticity amongst Machiavellians and psychopaths. High self-monitors tend to be overly concerned about the appropriateness of their behaviour, and may suppress their true selves; these individuals presumably report less authenticity (Harter, 2002). A study by Rauthmann (2011) linked self-monitoring behaviour with DT traits. He found that narcissists tended to alter their public appearance to gain social approval, while Machiavellians did so for protective functions such as avoiding social rejection.

Following the theoretical reasoning of Womick et al. (2019), acting inauthentic could be a manipulative strategy, where individuals purposely alter their self-expression to get what they really want. Kernis and Goldman (2006) refer to this performance as "false-self behaviour"; where callous individuals conceal their malevolent tendencies from others, and utilize strategic self-representation or deception. According to this reasoning, impression management, or

distorting your self-image (tactics frequently used by DT individuals) would result in lower scores on authenticity measures. However, for these individuals low scores does not necessarily mean they are less authentic, perhaps these instruments are not designed with considerations to capture more devious forms of authenticity. For manipulative individuals this mischievous behaviour could actually be suggestive of authenticity, since being deceptive is who they genuinely are. These propositions signify that there is still ambiguity regarding how those with undesirable personality characteristics represent and experience authenticity.

We were curious how authenticity would be manifested at work amongst dark individuals. As expected, Machiavellian-psychopathy was a significant predictor of increased CWB, supporting Cohen et al.'s (2014) results. Moreover, both narcissism and MachPsych were associated with more frequent interpersonal conflict. Upon initial interaction, the charm and confidence of narcissists may be appealing, but these feelings tend to subside when narcissists fail on delivering their grandiose promises (Rauthmann, 2012). Machiavellians have a tendency to view others as incompetent and manipulable, and when they externalize these thoughts they may evoke negative reactions from others (Jones & Paulhus, 2010). Finally, a psychopath's low affectivity and callousness means they are less likely to be concerned for others or to feel a sense of loyalty to their employer (O'Boyle et al., 2012). Thus it was not surprising that these individuals engaged in more antagonistic behaviour. This assertion is further supported by significant partial mediations, which indicate that authenticity, at least partly, facilitates the relationship between DT personalities and negative outcomes (i.e. CWB, social conflict).

### **Job Crafting**

As supported by our study, job crafting can be used for both productive and destructive purposes. Seeking resources was a positive predictor of both work engagement and OCB. This means that obtaining supplies or assistance increased one's likelihood to volunteer for additional tasks, as well as their dedication to their work. Similarly, those who sought challenges tended to take on additional tasks beyond their job requirements with the intention of assisting their organization. Conversely, reducing demands was also a significant predictor of increased CWBs. By reducing their workload an individual has more time to engage in negative behaviours like gossiping with coworkers or taking extended breaks (O'Boyle et al., 2012). Unlike Tims et al. (2015), we did not find evidence that increased job crafting (on any dimension) was associated with increased conflict at work.

Our results did not confirm that job crafting might assist individuals to achieve authenticity at work. Similar to Metin et al. (2016), we did not find a relationship between reducing demands and authenticity. Perhaps individuals who decrease or avoid their responsibilities will have less opportunity to engage in tasks or interactions that allow authenticity to foster. Interestingly, we did not uncover evidence that seeking additional resources was associated with authenticity. According to Tims et al. (2012) an individual's motivations may impact their decision to engage in job crafting and which tactic they utilize. For instance, someone may seek job resources out of necessity to make their job easier, and not necessarily with the hopes of cultivating authenticity. Furthermore, we postulated that job crafting would facilitate increased feelings of authenticity, which would result in a variety of positive and negative organizational results. We found partial support for authenticity facilitating relationships between seeking challenges and OCBs, as well as between reducing demands and CWBS. These results emphasize the importance of authenticity and employee inclinations, and the impact they may have on the resulting work outcome.

We speculated that since job crafting entails self-initiated behaviours it might be more appealing to those with selfish pre-dispositions. Contrary to our expectations, and to Roczniowska and Bakker (2016), DT factors were not significant predictors of reducing demands. However, we did find that those scoring highly on MachPsych reported pursuing fewer resources. Because of their cynical nature, it is possible that these individuals doubt the abilities of their colleagues and do not see the benefit in enlisting their help. Moreover, it appears that narcissists prefer to job craft by seeking challenges, exclusively. Narcissists likely seek challenges because their inflated egos make them believe they require additional challenge, they may engage in these tasks as an attempt to show off to their coworkers. These results convey that there are individual differences in the types of individuals and their intentions to engage in job crafting.

### **Study Limitations**

Despite our best efforts, there are still a number of methodological shortcomings that should be considered. First, the use of a cross-sectional design means we are not able to conclude causality from our data, nor can we determine whether authenticity has any long-term consequences. Additionally, many studies express concern for overreliance on self-report measures since it may permit participants to respond in a socially desirable way. This is

particularly likely on questionnaires that ask about undesirable characteristics and activities such as the Dark Triad, interpersonal conflict, and counterproductive work behaviours. We attempted to reduce social desirability bias by using an anonymous online survey. The relatively high means on the SD3 scale may indicate that individuals still felt comfortable disclosing their inclinations, no matter how socially unacceptable.

A final issue with measurement concerns the period of data collection. Due to circumstances around a global pandemic, our sample size and generalizability may have been limited. Additionally, it is difficult to ascertain whether the situation impacted participant responses. For instance, most scales provided a time-frame for reflection. It is possible that in the current state a respondent's job no longer permits opportunities for OCB or job crafting, or perhaps increased remote working has led to less interactions and less opportunity for someone to experience interpersonal conflict.

### **Theoretical and Practical Implications**

The results of the present study warrant several important theoretical and practical considerations. First, our research replicates and supplements what is known about the antecedents, benefits, and consequences of acting authentically at work. Specifically, this research was important because few studies to date have focused on the potential consequences associated with authentic behaviour. By extending this research, we challenged the common perception that authenticity has consistently positive effects. This study confirms that authenticity at work is not as simple as construed; finding significant associations between authenticity and CWB and interpersonal conflict illuminates a need to delve into other possible consequences of authenticity. Future studies should investigate whether a similar pattern exists amongst other negative work outcomes such as burnout and job performance.

Our study was among the first to investigate whether personality characteristics impact the type of individual experiencing authenticity, and the type of work behaviour exhibited. Future research should elaborate on which personality conditions may yield malevolent intentions or outcomes for authentic behaviour. However, as mentioned earlier there are concerns when studying the Dark Triad traits. Because of their disingenuous nature it would be unsurprising if those possessing DT traits deliberately falsified their responses. Accordingly, future studies should consider employing alternative or multiple techniques to ensure an employee's personality is properly captured. Specifically, Harms and Spain (2015) proposed

assessing dark personality characteristics via consultation with peers, conditional reasoning tests, or conducting behavioural interviews. Or, studies could assess the DT by incorporating potential indirect, underlying factors like self-monitoring, impression management, and vulnerability in relation to DT and authenticity.

Finally, by addressing the mediating role of authenticity, this study provides insight into the psychological process underlying one's motivation to engage in job crafting. From our results it is evident that authenticity plays at least a partial role in the relationships between the DT, job crafting, and work outcomes. Throughout our paper we allude to self-interest being a potential underlying motivation, future studies should consider formally addressing this factor or other possible motives.

From a practical standpoint, our results indicate that authenticity at work may create a dilemma for organizations. We are aware of the possible benefits of high felt authenticity and how low levels can be harmful, but authenticity amongst those with malevolent tendencies can also be detrimental to an organization's functioning. Similarly, our study uncovered circumstances in which job crafting also had destructive outcomes. Therefore, practitioners need to take a nuanced approach, ensuring they are only promoting authenticity and job crafting amongst those with wholesome intentions. We encourage managers to engage in transparent conversations about employee aspirations to uncover opportunities that can stimulate a better person-job fit. It is important that organizations try to foster authenticity for those who are not pre-disposed to these dark characteristics. Managers can do so by allowing workers to adjust their conditions or job content (e.g., proposing interesting tasks), or providing additional resources. However, our results indicate that managers should be wary about allowing individuals to craft jobs by reducing demands as this was linked to increased counterproductive behaviour.

## **Conclusion**

The present study examined the relations between workplace authenticity, the Dark Triad, job crafting, and various work outcomes and behaviours. Our results support the notion that there are circumstances in which authenticity has a dark side. This study highlighted individual differences that may predict what types of individuals pursue authenticity, and engage in job crafting. Specifically, authenticity appears to have destructive effects when acted upon by those with unfavourable personality traits and when accomplished through job crafting by

reducing one's demands. Overall, it is recommended that managers are cognizant of both the beneficial and damaging effects of authenticity. By identifying the circumstances where authenticity may be an antecedent of counterproductive work behaviours, companies can utilize this information to limit or prevent these conditions from arising. This knowledge could be especially valuable to organizations that frequently rely on personality characteristics as predictors of positive workplace outcomes.



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Appendix A  
Informed Consent



Utrecht University

**Welcome!**

You are invited to participate in a study about authenticity in the workplace. Please read this informed consent carefully and decide whether you would like to participate in this online survey.

**What would my involvement entail?**

- You will be asked to complete an online survey that consists of questionnaires about personality, authenticity, and work-related behaviours and outcomes.
- Participation will take approximately 10-minutes.

**Study Risks and Benefits for Participants:**

- Your participation will earn you the opportunity to enter a lottery to win one of two 10€ giftcards to Amazon.
- There are no anticipated risks associated with participation in this study.

**Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal of Consent:**

- You are under no obligation to participate in this research study.
- You can end your participation at any time, without any explanation, and without any negative consequences. You can withdraw by simply exiting the survey and choosing not to continue.
- Surveys for which multiple questions are not complete will be discarded and excluded from all data analysis.

**Collection of Personal Information:**

- The personal data collected (e.g., age, education, sex) will be used to report demographics regarding the sample of participants.
- All data will be recorded anonymously and confidentially, as no names or potentially identifying information will be documented.
- Information will be securely stored, and only the Masters student researcher and supervisor will have access to the data collected.

If you have any questions, please contact [j.j.brazier@students.uu.nl](mailto:j.j.brazier@students.uu.nl)

Please choose one of the following options:

- I voluntarily consent to participate in this research project
- I do not consent, and do not wish to participate

Appendix B  
Qualtrics Questionnaire

*The Short Dark Triad (SD3)*

Instructions: Below are a number of statements that you may or may not agree with. It is important that you are honest when you rate the statements. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement.

<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>
1	2	3	4	5

**Machiavellianism**

1. It's not wise to tell your secrets.
2. I like to use clever manipulation to get my way.
3. Whatever it takes, you must get the important people on your side.
4. Avoid direct conflict with others because they may be useful in the future.
5. It's wise to keep track of information that you can use against people later.
6. You should wait for the right time to get back at people.
7. There are things you should hide from other people to preserve your reputation.
8. Make sure your plans benefit yourself, not others.
9. Most people can be manipulated.

**Narcissism**

1. People see me as a natural leader.
2. I hate being the center of attention. (R)
3. Many group activities tend to be dull without me.
4. I know that I am special because everyone keep telling me so.
5. I like to get acquainted with important people.
6. I feel embarrassed if someone compliments me. (R)
7. I have been compared to famous people.
8. I am an average person. (R)
9. I insist on getting the respect I deserve.

**Psychopathy**

1. I like to get revenge on authorities.
2. I avoid dangerous situations. (R)
3. Payback needs to be quick and nasty.
4. People often say I'm out of control.
5. It's true that I can be mean to others.
6. People who mess with me always regret it.
7. I have never gotten into trouble with the law. (R)
8. I enjoy having sex with people I hardly know
9. I'll say anything to get what I want.

*IAM Work Scale*

Instructions: The items below refer to your **most recent work situation** only and not to other situations. Thus, while answering these items, please think of how well each statement applies to you during the **past four weeks**.

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

*Job Crafting Scale (JCS)*

Instructions: The following statements are about your behaviour at work. For each statement, please indicate how frequently you have engaged in the specified behaviour at your current job.

1 - Never	2	3	4	5 - Often
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## Seeking Resources

1. I ask others for feedback on my job performance.
2. I ask colleagues for advice.
3. I ask my supervisor for advice.
4. I try to learn new things at work.
5. I contacted other people from work (e.g., colleagues, supervisors) to get the necessary information for completing my tasks.
6. When I have difficulties or problems at my work, I discuss them with people from my work environment.

## Seeking Challenges

7. I ask for more tasks if I finish my work.
8. I ask for more responsibilities.
9. I ask for more odd jobs.

## Reducing Demands

10. I try to ensure that my work is emotionally less intense.
11. I make sure that my work is mentally less intense.
12. I try to ensure that my work is physically less intense.
13. I try to simplify the complexity of my tasks at work.



*Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES -9)*

Instructions: The following 9 statements are about how you feel at work. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way about your job. If you have never had this feeling, choose the “Never” option. If you have had this feeling, indicate how often by choosing the option that best describes how frequently you feel that way.

Never	Almost Never (a few times a year or less)	Rarely (once a month or less)	Sometimes (a few times a month)	Often (once a week)	Very Often (a few times a week)	Always
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1. At my work, I feel bursting with energy.
2. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.
3. I am enthusiastic about my job.
4. My job inspires me.
5. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.
6. I feel happy when I am working intensely.
7. I am proud of the work that I do.
8. I am immersed in my work.
9. I get carried away when I am working.

*Interpersonal Conflict at Work Scale (ICAWS)*

Instructions: The items below refer to your **most recent work situation**. Please reflect carefully on each statement and try to remember how often each statement occurs at your current job.

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Quite Often	Very Often
1. How often do you get into arguments with others at work?					
2. How often do other people yell at you at work?					
3. How often are people rude to you at work?					
4. How often do other people do nasty things to you at work?					

*Organizational Citizenship Behaviours (OCB)*

Instructions: The following statements are about your behaviour at work. For each statement, carefully reflect and try to remember whether this is actually something you do or not. Please select how characteristic each statement is of you at your job.

1 – Not at all characteristic	2	3	4	5 – Very characteristic
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1. Helping other employees with their work when they have been absent.
2. Volunteering to do things not formally required by the job.
3. Taking the initiative to orient new employees to the department even though it is not part of my job description.
4. Helping others when their workload increases (assisting others until they get over the hurdles).
5. Assisting supervisor with his/her duties.
6. Making innovative suggestions to improve the overall quality of the department.
7. Punctuality in arriving at work on time in the morning, and after lunch and breaks.
8. Exhibiting attendance at work beyond the norm, for example I take less days off than most individuals or less than allowed.
9. Giving advance notice if unable to come to work.

*Counterproductive Work Behaviours (CWB)*

Instructions: The following statements are about your behaviour at work. For each statement, carefully reflect and try to remember whether this is actually something you do or have done. Please indicate how frequently you have engaged in the specified behaviour.

1 - Never	2	3	4	5 - Very Often
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1. Exaggerated about your hours worked.
2. Started negative rumors about your company.
3. Gossiped about your coworkers.
4. Covered up your mistakes.
5. Competed with your coworkers in an unproductive way.
6. Gossiped about your supervisor.
7. Stayed out of sight to avoid work.
8. Taken company equipment or merchandise.
9. Blamed your coworkers for your mistakes.
10. Intentionally worked slow.

*Job Satisfaction*

Please rate how satisfied you are with your current job.

- 1 – Extremely Dissatisfied
- 2 – Slightly Dissatisfied
- 3 – Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied
- 4 – Slightly Satisfied
- 5 – Extremely Satisfied

*Demographics*

The questions below will be used to report demographics regarding the sample of participants.

1. What is the average number of hours you typically work each week?
  - Below 16
  - 16 – 24
  - 24 – 32
  - 32 – 40
  - 40 +
2. How many years have you been working in this position at this company?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Please enter your age.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Please specify your sex.
  - Male
  - Female
  - Other
5. What is your (primary) nationality?
  - American
  - British
  - Canadian
  - Dutch
  - Other. Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Please select the highest educational level you have completed.
  - Less than a high school diploma
  - High school diploma or equivalent (E.g., VMBO, HAVO, VWO, MBO)
  - Post-secondary (Bachelor's degree, Diploma, HBO/ WO Bachelor's)
  - Master's Degree
  - PhD or equivalent
  - Other. Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_