Felt Authenticity and Demonstrating Transformational Leadership in Faith Communities

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ABSTRACT

This study examined relations between felt authenticity and transformational leadership behaviors of 184 Christian faith community leaders. Felt authenticity was examined across 4 roles associated with transformational leadership behaviors: inspirational motivation in the visionary leader role, idealized influence in the positive role model role, intellectual stimulation in the champion of change role, and individualized consideration in the coach and mentor role. These roles were generally found to be positively related to specific behaviors of transformational leadership required for the role. Results also indicated that leaders exhibit different levels of transformational leadership behaviors within the same role with general consistency across roles.

Key Words: transformational leadership, felt authenticity, cross-role variation in behavior, faith community

Introduction

Leadership in faith communities has come under increased scrutiny due to the rising number of cases of abuse of church members by some clergy who are supposed to be our most trusted spiritual leaders. As public outcries for ethical behavior and transparency in faith communities has increased (Sosik, 2006), so too has the attention leadership researchers and practitioners are paying to authentic leadership (e.g., Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005). Authentic leaders are moral/ethical, future-oriented, and development-focused. They are true to themselves and others, and strive to act in accordance with their authentic self. Self-awareness and self-regulation are associated with positive outcomes for leaders and followers (Luthans &Avolio, 2003; Sosik, Jung, & Dinger, 2009), and may be essential for leaders of faith communities who are supposed to role model church teachings (Roozen & Neiman, 2005).

One form of authentic leadership that is especially relevant to faith communities is authentic transformational leadership (cf. Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). Callahan's (1997) study of faith community leaders identified transformational leadership as best supporting the competencies required for church leadership success. Moreover, several faith-based universities have integrated aspects of transformational leadership as part

of their seminary training of ministers and laypeople (e.g., Bethel University, 2010). Authentic transformational leaders strive to put their character strengths into action through the display of ethical and developmental behaviors aimed at shaping the character and leadership potential of their followers. But such leadership is challenging as it requires playing the roles of visionary, role model, champion of change, and coach/mentor, and leaders are not always capable of acting in accordance with their true self-concept across different roles (Bass, 2008; Sosik, 2006; Sosik & Cameron, in press).

An issue for faith community leaders is whether the roles played are indeed a true expression of the self, and whether it is possible to display behavior that reflects being true to oneself within the role. Answers to these questions may be found in social psychology research indicating that authenticity involves behaving in ways that are personally expressive of the self within a role (Sheldon, Ryan, Rawsthorne, & Hardi, 1997). This view parallels authentic transformational leaders' tendency to behave in ways that feel authentic and expressive of values, personality, and character strengths (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Sosik, 2006), and leadership literature stressing the importance of context (Antonakis, Avolio, & Sivasubramaniam, 2003; Bass, 2008; Yukl, 2010). Authentic transformational leadership can evolve in many contexts, especially those that call for positive role modeling and inspiration (Bass, 2008) such as faith communities. Those who share a particular religious tradition (e.g., Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism) or other spiritual beliefs (e.g., Scientology, Sikhism) form faith communities that provide purpose, meaning, and hope to 84% of the world's population (Religionfacts.com, 2010), yet leadership research in this context is scant.

In this study, we examine relations between felt authenticity (i.e., the extent to which leaders feel a role is an authentic expression of the self), and transformational leadership behaviors, within four specific roles (i.e., visionary, role model, champion of change, and coach/mentor) of Christian faith community leaders. In doing so, we identify some differences in felt authenticity and behaviors of transformational leadership across roles, and general consistency between felt authenticity and behavior within role. This study aspires to highlight the importance of context to either support the faith community leader's self-expression of authentic behavior, or promote departures from what one would expect from the leader. While prior research indicates that transformational leadership has a positive effect on work attitudes and performance at both the individual and organizational levels (see Bass, 2008 for a review), few studies have examined the psychological antecedents of authentic transformational leadership, with no such research in faith communities. The current study addresses this gap in the literature.

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses Development

We draw on self-concept-based perspectives inherent in theories of authentic leadership development (e.g., Gardner et al., 2005), authentic transformational leadership (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999), and social identity (Hogg, 2003; Tajfel, 1972) to

develop and test hypotheses which cast light on the underlying processes by which one's authenticity level affects one's display of authentic leadership behaviors. Specifically, we propose that faith community leaders' felt authenticity is associated with their demonstrating transformational leadership behaviors as shown in Figure 1. Integral to this theoretical model are aspects of the self, which provide motivational mechanisms underlying these relationships.

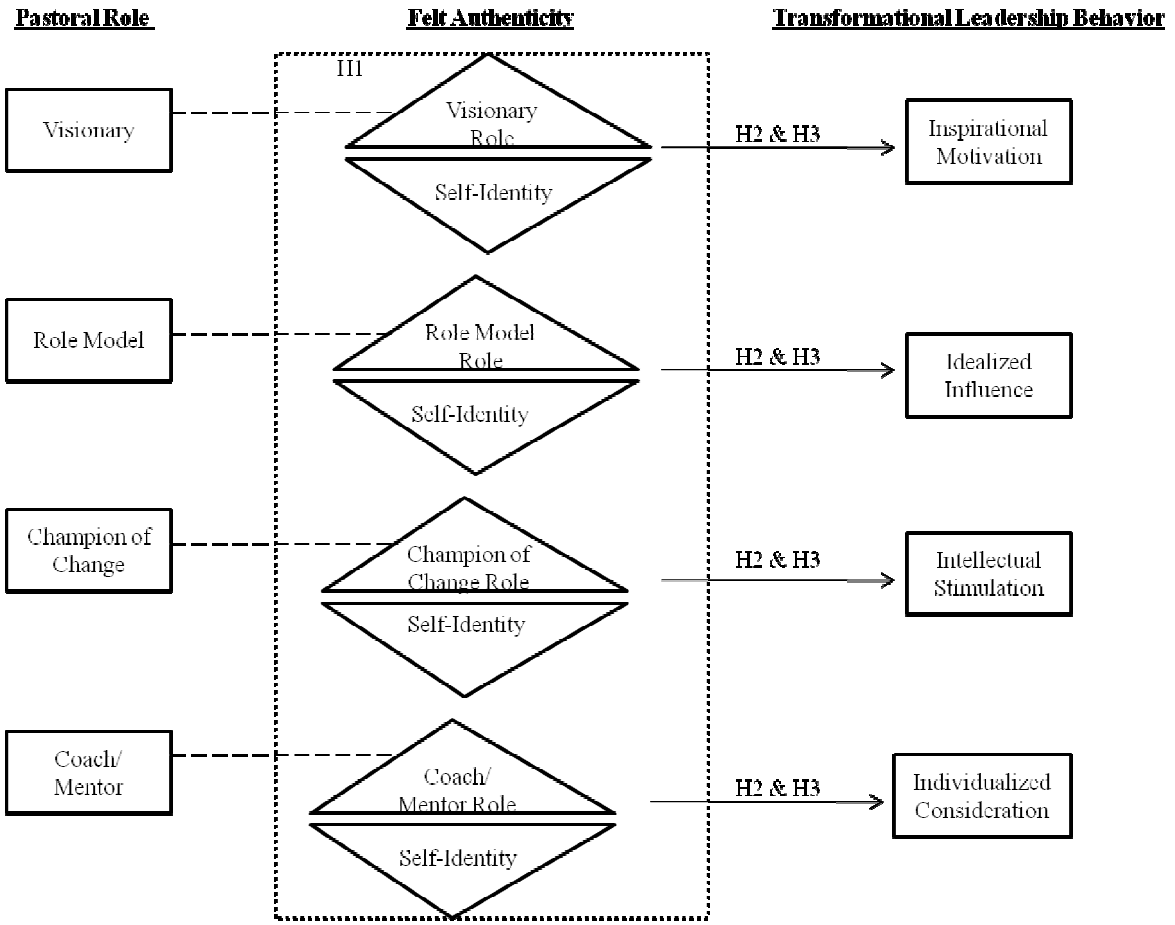

Figure 1. Conceptual model of felt-authenticity and transformational leadership behavior for Christian faith community leaders. H = Hypothesis. Higher levels of felt authenticity represented by alignment of role and self-identity.

Self-Concept, Identity, and Roles

The *self-concept* represents one's overall understanding the self in relation to others that is derived from the "compository of life span experiences, motivational states, and action orientations" (Cross & Markus, 1991, p. 230). The self-concept is often shaped by the various roles one plays in life, and often motivates the behaviors one displays in a certain role or situation. Roles involve expectations regarding the behavior of an individual in a position, and the individual's perception of how to behave in the position by meeting others' expectations with the desire to express the self (Sheldon et al., 1997). By providing chronically accessible knowledge about how one feels, thinks, values things, and relates to others within roles, the self provides modes of being which

Tajfel (1972) calls a *personal identity* or recognition of the self as being a person different from other individuals. According to social identity theory (Tajfel, 1972), the self is created, in part, based on "the individual's knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of his group membership" (p. 292) as one accumulates life experiences in the many roles one plays over time. Thus, personal identity is related to one's belief about one's unique characteristics, whereas social identity is related to one's group memberships.

Felt Authenticity

Consistency between one's self-concept and behavior is integral to the notion of authenticity, which can be defined as "owning one's personal experiences, be they thoughts, emotions, needs, wants, preferences, or beliefs, processes captured by the injunction to know oneself" (Harter, 2002, p. 382). Being authentic means being true to one's self, values, thoughts, emotions and beliefs, and acting consistently with them. Authenticity is considered to be continuous, which means that individuals are judged to be more to less authentic, rather than authentic versus inauthentic (Gardner et al., 2005). Kernis (2002) proposed that being authentic leads to being genuine, true, stable, and consistent, and being high in self-awareness. In this study, we examine faith community leaders' *felt authenticity*, the extent to which they feel authentic when acting with a sense of self-expression in a particular role (Sheldon et al., 1997).

Authentic Transformational Leadership and Its Roles

Transformational leadership contains four components: idealized influence (behavioral and attributed), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 2008). *Idealized influence* describes the charisma associated with leaders who set high standards for moral and ethical conduct, are confident about the future, and are exemplars for emulation through their values, behavior, and performance. As a result, followers admire, trust, and identify with their leaders, and commit to the mission, cause, and goals of their collective community. Thus, idealized influence may reflect the *positive role model role* played by transformational leaders, and is obligatory of Christian faith community leaders as suggested in many Bible passages (Schaefer, 2003).

Inspirational motivation entails providing followers with a challenging and meaningful vision that engages them in shared goals and undertakings (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). The vision paints a picture of hope, optimism, and confidence that engages followers to also have faith in a brighter future (Bass, 2008). Thus, inspirational motivation may reflect the *visionary role* played by transformational leaders, and is required for preaching and evangelism performed by faith community leaders (Schaefer, 2003).

Intellectual stimulation promotes positive changes in people and processes. It challenges followers to solve problems using rational and inventive techniques, such as critically evaluating the situation, challenging assumptions, and questioning the status quo. As a result, followers are more likely to think for themselves and work toward

creative and innovative outcomes (Bass, 2008). Thus, intellectual stimulation may reflect the *champion of change role* played by transformational leaders, which Yount (2008) required of Christian faith community leaders for putting "on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator" (Colossians 3:10) and having "the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:16).

Individualized consideration entails paying special attention to specific followers' needs for personal growth and achievement, and trying to meet their needs and satisfy their expectations for future development. As a result followers become willing to develop (Bass, 2008). Thus, individualized consideration may reflect the *coach/mentor role* played by transformational leaders, and is essential for Christian faith community leaders' pastoral care, social outreach, and lay empowerment (Schaefer, 2003). These transformational leadership behaviors, their roles, and authenticity felt towards the roles are summarized in Table 1.

By displaying these behaviors in the roles they play, authentic transformational leaders embody character strengths, virtues, and values reflected in behaviors that are consistent with their true self (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Sosik & Cameron, in press). Thus, we define *authentic transformational leadership* here as the display of the behaviors of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration that reflects character strengths, identities, values, and virtues in a way that is true to the self and others.

Authentic transformational leaders look inward to achieve greater self-awareness and self-identity when formulating and articulating collective goals and vision, or when interacting with followers (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Sosik, 2006; Sosik & Cameron, in press). Authentic leaders' high level of self-awareness includes knowledge of their values/moral guideposts and attributions (Gardner et al., 2005). Individuals with high levels of self-awareness know and reflect upon their values well, and are loyal to the values they are holding. Thus, a precondition for self-awareness is that they have insight and knowledge of who they are, what they value, and how they want to behave.

Authentic leaders also possess a high level of balanced information processing (Gardner et al., 2005). They tend to process self-relevant information without distortions, exaggerations, or ignorance of internal experiences, private knowledge, and external evaluations of the self. In order to be authentic, individuals need to objectively evaluate and accept their strengths and weaknesses, and positive and negative qualities, as well as use feedback from others for self-improvement (Kernis, 2002). Individuals who do not possess balanced information processing capacity find it hard to acknowledge their personal shortcomings, such as a lack of skill in a particular area, undesirable personal attributes, or certain negative emotions. In this study, we argue that faith community leaders with higher levels of felt authenticity will behave more consistently with their role-related identities due in part to balanced information processing.

Table 1. Description of Constructs and How They are Manifested in Christian Faith Community Leaders

Construct	Brief Definition	Manifestation Example
Role Authenticity		
Visionary	Self-identity consistent with expectations for providing foresight, prophecies or revelations	Faith community leader feels comfortable being viewed as mystic articulating visions of wisdom to the faithful (e.g., Saint Faustina, Saint Padre Pio)
Positive Role Model	Self-identity consistent with expectations for setting a positive example for others	Faith community leader possesses self-identity centered on setting a positive example for others (e.g., Pope John Paul II, Billy Graham)
Champion of Change	Self-identity consistent with expectations for helping to bring about positive change	Faith community leader feels comfortable advocating positive changes in people and institutions (e.g., Pope John XXIII, Joyce Meyer, Fulton J. Sheen)
Coach/Mentor	Self-identity consistent with expectations for giving wise counsel and care-giving	Faith community leader possesses self identity centered on assisting the faithful to become their best possible self or assist in their needs (e.g., Joel Osteen, Fred Rogers, Mother Teresa of Calcutta)
Transformational Leadership Behavior		
Inspirational Motivation	Crafting and articulating a challenging and meaningful vision	Preaching and evangelizing to reach the faithful and nonbelievers
Idealized Influence	Acting charismatically and ethically in ways that draw in others	Talking about the importance of trust and forgiveness as core values of the faithful, and living true to one's word
Intellectual Stimulation	Challenging others to change self, others and processes for the good	Advising others to reflect upon their vices and personal failings in order to repent and reform to change their lives for the better through new faith-based ways of thinking and behaving
Individualized Consideration	Paying special attention to others' needs and assisting in their development	Tending to the disadvantaged and sick in the community and those in need of spiritual, emotional, physical and other forms of care, social outreach, and lay empowerment

In addition, authentic individuals are more likely to possess self-regulated behavior, which leads to demonstrating behaviors consistent with the self concept. Criteria used to regulate and monitor personal attitudes and behaviors may serve to represent the self in the presence of important others and balance self and other interests to achieve an appropriate response for the context (Gardner et al., 2005). One's self-regulated behaviors are realized through exertion of self control through the following three processes described in self-concordance theory (Sheldon, 2002): (1) establishing existing or newly formulated internal standards, (2) assessing the differences between these internal standards and real and future outcomes, and (3) identifying possible actions for reconciling these differences (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Thus, leaders with higher felt authenticity possess an increased level of knowledge of their self, and achieve a deep commitment to their internalized values, identity, and goals (Sheldon et al., 1997), which we propose will lead to their demonstrating authentic transformational leadership behaviors.

Cross-Role Variation in Felt Authenticity and Transformational Leadership Behaviors

Peterson and Seligman (2004) reiterated social psychology's tradition of defining the self as "a set of masks, roles and performances, programmed by social norms and role requirements" (p. 251). Psychologists going back to Jung (1939) have argued that in navigating through such norms and role requirements, individuals are challenged to find their authentic self beneath the multitude of personas and roles to be played in life. Work on theories of self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2000) and self-concordance (Sheldon, 2002) supports this view. According to self-determination theory, individuals possess a need for autonomy, choice, and behavior that is authored by the self. An authentic self will evolve if one acts autonomously and experiences an inner sense of mastery. Any roles or situations which do not allow for personal choice and autonomy can lead individuals to suppress their personal experiences and perceive their behaviors as inauthentic. According to self-concordance theory, individuals develop a sense of personal ownership of goals that reflect their values, beliefs, and personality. Any roles or situations which inhibit an individual from feeling a sense of ownership of goals may create a sense that the role being played is not consistent with the true self, and make the individual feel cognitive and behavioral dissonance.

Building upon the social-contextual assumptions of self-determination theory, Sheldon et al. (1997) argued that not all roles are consistent with the true self, and demonstrated within-subject differences in felt authenticity within different behavioral roles. Moreover, self-concordance theory suggests that some roles may promote false self-presentations because their associated activities do allow individuals to express their true self (Sheldon, 2002). Although each of the transformational leadership roles are important for faith community leaders as described above, the expectation to be "all things to all people" is likely to exert enormous pressure on such leaders. This is because these roles require more time than is available, and different roles often challenge an individual to be true to oneself, thus causing a crisis of authenticity and identity when

role expectations and role perceptions differ, and role conflict may then emerge (Powell, 2009; Schaefer, 2003). Given the various role expectations described above, we expected that faith community leaders would report different levels of felt authenticity depending on the role. We did not venture specific predictions regarding which roles would be associated with the highest levels of felt authenticity given a lack of theory and the context and exploratory nature of this study. Thus,

Hypothesis 1: Among faith community leaders, felt authenticity varies across roles.

Sheldon et al. (1997) observed that "when people feel constrained and controlled by circumstances of a given situation, they are likely to behave quite differently than in situations when they feel comfortable and genuine" (p. 1382). As such, not all leaders are expected to excel in each of the behavioral components of transformational leadership (Bass, 2008). The degree to which a leader displays each of these behaviors may be a function of personality, character strengths, and the context or role in which s/he is embedded. For example, leaders embedded in technological or problem-solving contexts are likely to emphasize the display of intellectual stimulation (Bass, 2008), while faith community leaders are likely to most frequently display idealized influence and individualized consideration due to the importance of the care giving, teaching, and positive role model roles valued in faith communities (Yount, 2008).

The context of leading in a Christian faith community may place a great deal of importance on being a positive role model and displaying idealized influence behaviors, although this may vary by denomination. For example, an Evangelical Christian leader may have a larger community role model presence than a Catholic priest. Yount (2008) pointed out that Jesus Christ taught by example and "simply lived what he taught" (p. 51). Schaefer (2003) argued that many scriptural passages suggest that church leaders ought to be a role model in the community, like Christ. Given the unique nature of leading in a faith community context and the differences in felt authenticity across specific roles predicted in Hypothesis 1, we expected within-subject variation in the display of behavioral components of transformational leadership across roles, and thus we posited:

Hypothesis 2: Among faith community leaders, the components of transformational leadership behavior vary within the same roles, in addition to showing slight variability across different roles.

Felt authenticity within a role has been proposed to enable an individual to behave in ways that are personally expressive, self-determined, and authentic (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Sheldon et al., 1997). Expressing the true self through self-concordant behaviors reflects one's important interests, values and beliefs, and is integral to self-concept-based theories of charismatic/transformational leadership (Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993). Building upon this theoretical perspective, Sosik and Dinger (2007) reported associations between corporate leaders' self-monitoring, inspirational vision content reflecting their true beliefs and intentions, and ratings of their actual idealized influence and inspirational motivation behavior. Similarly, Sosik et al. (2009) demonstrated

linkages between corporate leaders' self-transcendence values, collective self-construal, altruistic behavior, and managerial performance.

This stream of research, and self-concordance theory (Sheldon, 2002), suggests that roles that afford faith community leaders felt authenticity are likely to prompt the display of behaviors that reflect the nature of a particular role. Specifically, the visionary role of Christian faith community leaders entails evangelism, dynamism, preaching, and developing consensus (Schaefer, 2003), which we expected would be associated with the display of inspirational motivation. This is because inspirational motivation for such leaders involves enthusiastically and optimistically casting and articulating the vision of "making disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19), "preaching the word" (2 Timothy 4:2), and building the Church community (1 Corinthians 12:12-13). Similarly, the positive role model role of Christian faith community leaders entails being a role model in the community and living what one teaches (Yount, 2008), which we expected would be associated with the display of idealized influence because idealized influence for such leaders involves following the example of Christ as teaching by example through one's words and actions (Acts 4:13). As Gardner et al. (2005) observed, leaders with higher levels of authenticity are more likely to identify themselves as positive models for others.

The champion of change role of Christian faith community leaders entails not being afraid of innovative ideas or of risk taking, being open and inventive in teaching (Schaefer, 2003), and preparing for and creating a learning experience (Yount, 2008). As such, we expected the champion of change role to be associated with the display of intellectual stimulation. This is because intellectual stimulation for such leaders involves getting followers to question their basic assumptions about how they live their lives (Matthew 7:1-3), preparing an actual plan for making positive life changes (2 Timothy 2:15), and using unique approaches to Bible study including observation, reflection, and interpretation (Yount, 2008).

The coach/mentor role of Christian faith community leaders entails taking strength from and being strong in teaching the Word of God, pastoral care and healing, social outreach, and empowering laypersons such as deacons and church members (Schaefer, 2003), which we expected to be associated with individualized consideration. This is because individualized consideration for such leaders involves coaching and mentoring by "teaching them" (Matthew 28:29; 2 Timothy 4:2), "heal[ing] the sick/bandage the hurt" and "strengthening the feeble" (Ezekiel 34:4), as well as providing laypersons with psychological and physical resources to perform the work of the church (Schaefer, 2003). Taken together, this line of reasoning suggests:

Hypothesis 3: Different felt role authenticities are associated with the behavioral components of transformational leadership such that: (a) inspirational motivation is associated with the visionary role, (b) idealized influence is associated with the positive role model role, (c) intellectual stimulation is associated with the champion of change role, and (d) individualized consideration is associated with the coach/mentor role.

Method

Participants and Procedure

The data for this study come from a list of pastors (i.e., church leaders) of various Christian faith communities representing a range of denominations across the U.S. and their email addresses. This list was compiled by Diener Consultants, Inc., a church marketing organization located in the Northeastern U.S. Working from this list, we used a web-based survey to collect data and randomly sent email invitations directly to 300 pastors on this list. The email instructions stated that the purpose of the study was to better understand the psychological processes and outcomes of leadership in faith communities. The instructions provided a URL address that housed the survey, and requested that the pastors complete the survey personally. The survey included questions relating to pastors' felt authenticity, transformational leadership behaviors, socially desirable responding, and general demographics.

One hundred and eighty-four pastors of the faith communities responded to the 300 invitations that were randomly sent out by completing the surveys – a response rate of 61.33%. Eighty-six percent of the pastors were White; 89% were men; the mean age was 52 years (*SD* = 9.25 years); and the mean tenure as pastor was 15 years (*SD* = 10.12 years). The pastors represented the following denominations: Assembly/Church of God, 10%; Baptist, 11%; Christian Reformed, 1%; Congregational, 4%; Disciples of Christ, 1%; Episcopal, 9%; Evangelical, 7%; Lutheran, 10%; Mennonite, 1%; Methodist, 14%; Nazarene, 6%; Presbyterian, 7%; Roman Catholic, 3%; United Brethren, 6%; non-denominational, 5%; and others, 5%.

Measures

Felt Authenticity in Roles

We adapted a measure developed by Sheldon et al. (1997) to assess pastors' felt authenticity in each of four roles associated with transformational leadership. This measure asked the pastors to respond to a series of statements pertaining to the *visionary*, *positive role model*, *champion of change*, and *coach/mentor* roles or identities. For each identity, pastors were asked to envision that aspect of their life and to reflect upon the thoughts, emotions, and behavior that they most frequently experience in that role or life domain. Namely, they were requested to try to capture how that aspect of the self felt to them by responding to five authenticity items, separately for each of the four roles, using a scale that ranged from (1) *strongly disagree* to (9) *strongly agree* (Sheldon et al., 1997). A sample item reads "I experience this aspect of myself as an authentic part of who I am." A role authenticity score was computed for each role as the mean of the five responses for that role. The alpha coefficients for each of the four roles ranged from .74 (in the positive role model role) to .85 (in the coach/mentor role), indicating adequate internal consistency.

Transformational Leadership Behaviors

Pastors' transformational leadership behavior was measured using 16 items from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-Form 5X; Bass & Avolio, 1997). Pastors were asked to judge how frequently they exhibited specific behaviors measured by the MLQ-5X on a five-point frequency scale ranging from 0 (*not at all*) to 4 (*frequently, if not always*). Sample items from each transformational leadership four-item subscale include the following: (a) *idealized influence behavior* ("I consider the moral and ethical consequences of decisions") (b) *inspirational motivation* ("I talk optimistically about the future"), (c) *intellectual stimulation* ("I suggest new ways of looking at how to complete assignments"), and (d) *individualized consideration* ("I consider an individual as having different needs, abilities, and aspirations from others"). The alpha coefficients for each of these subscales ranged from .69 (for idealized influence behavior) to .81 (for intellectual stimulation), indicating adequate internal consistency. In a comprehensive analysis of its factor structure, Antonakis et al. (2003) found the MLQ-5X to possess adequate psychometric properties and empirical distinction between the four components of transformational leadership measured by the MLQ-5X as proposed by Bass and Avolio (1997). Similar results were found in this study's data given results of a series of confirmatory factor analysis (CFAs) indicating validity for the idealized influence behavior (CFI = .95, TLI = .90, RMSEA = .08, SRMR = .04), inspirational motivation (CFI = .97, TLI = .93, RMSEA = .08, SRMR = .03), intellectual stimulation (CFI = .99, TLI = .97, RMSEA = .08, SRMR = .02), and individualized consideration (CFI = 1.00, TLI = .99, RMSEA = .01, SRMR = .02) components of transformational leadership (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Construct Discriminant Validity

We also conducted a series of CFAs to provide empirical evidence that each of the four felt authenticity in role measures can be differentiated from their associated transformational leadership behavior. The first set of analysis treated these scales as a one-factor model, while the second set of analysis treated these two scales as a two-factor model. The two-factor model fit the data well across the positive role model role vs. idealized influence behavior (CFI = .92, TLI = .90, RMSEA = .08; SRMR = .06), visionary role vs. inspirational motivation (CFI = .94, TLI = .93, RMSEA = .08, SRMR = .06), champion of change role vs. intellectual stimulation (CFI = .94, TLI = .91, RMSEA = .09, SRMR = .07), and coach/mentor role vs. individualized consideration (CFI = .95, TLI = .93, RMSEA = .08, SRMR = .05) comparisons. The CFA with the one-factor model revealed a poor fit with the data across the across the positive role model role vs. idealized influence behavior (CFI = .74, TLI = .66, RMSEA = .15, SRMR = .10), visionary role vs. inspirational motivation (CFI = .79, TLI = .73, RMSEA = .15, SRMR = .09), champion of change role vs. intellectual stimulation (CFI = .72, TLI = .63, RMSEA = .21, SRMR = .14), and coach/mentor role vs. individualized consideration (CFI = .84, TLI = .78, RMSEA = .16, SRMR = .09) comparisons.

Control Variables

Based on prior research (e.g., Bass, 2008; Sheldon, 2002), demographic variables theoretically associated with felt authenticity and transformational leadership were first identified. These variables considered were age, gender, race, tenure, and denomination of pastors. Tenure as pastor was excluded in subsequent analyses, because it had no significant correlations with felt authenticity and transformational leadership behavior but strong intercorrelations with other control variables. Given the self-reports provided by the pastors, we also controlled for their *socially desirable responding* using Reynold's (1982) 13-item short form of the Crowne and Marlowe Social Desirability Scale. Pastors rated each item on a *true – false* dichotomous scale (sample item: "No matter who I'm talking to, I am always a good listener," Guttman Split-Half Coefficient = .71).

Results

Means, standard deviations, reliability coefficients, and correlations among the variables are presented in Table 2. All of the reliability estimates for the scales were above .70, except for idealized influence behavior which was slightly below .70. White pastors reported significantly ($p < .05$) lower levels of intellectual stimulation ($r = -.18$) and socially desirable responding ($r = -.17$) than Black pastors. Due to the self-report nature of the study, pastors' socially desirable responding was positively and significantly ($p < .05$) associated with felt authenticity in all roles except the positive role model role, and all four transformational leadership behaviors as expected (*r*s ranged from .17 to .36). While these relations are considered to be moderate (Cohen, 1988), we nevertheless included socially desirable responding in subsequent analyses as a control variable.

Hypothesis Testing

To test Hypothesis 1, that faith community leaders vary in the level of authenticity they feel in different roles, we conducted a within-subject MANCOVA on the four role-authenticity scores controlling for age, gender, race, denomination, and socially desirable responding. Results indicated a significant role effect on felt authenticity, F (3, 546) = 12.23, $p < .001$, with no significant covariate effects, indicating that leaders prefer some roles over others**.** Specifically, results of Bonferroni multiple pairwise comparison tests indicated that leaders felt significantly ($p <. 01$) more authentic in the positive role model role ($M = 8.08$, $SD = .87$) than in the coach/mentor role ($M = 7.55$, $SD = 1.30$), and least authentic in both the visionary ($M = 7.13$, $SD = 1.52$) and champion of change ($M = 7.24$, $SD = 1.43$) roles**.** Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

To test Hypothesis 2, that faith community leaders also differ in their display of transformational leadership behaviors across roles, we conducted a series of mixed MANCOVAs on the idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration behavior scores controlling for age, gender, race, denomination, and socially desirable responding. To account for variance due to differences in felt authenticity within each role, we modeled a between-subject blocking factor, namely Authenticity-in-Role Level (high vs. low based on a median split of each

Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations, Reliability Coefficients and Intercorrelations (N = 184 focal leaders)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Age	-												
2. Gender	.04	-											
3. Race	.17*	-.04	-										
4. Denomination	-.09	-.06	.13	-									
5. Socially desirable responding	.14*	.00	-.17*	.06	-								
6. Visionary role authenticity	.04	.04	-.08	-.07	.23**	-							
7. Positive role model role authenticity	.09	-.08	.04	.06	.13	.35**	-						
8. Champion of change role authenticity	.04	-.03	-.04	.03	.17*	.64**	.37**	-					
9. Coach/mentor role authenticity	.09	-.04	.04	.13	.23**	.42**	.50**	.46**	-				
10. Inspirational motivation	-.08	-.05	-.12	-.07	.36**	.61**	.33**	.41**	.39**	-			
11. Idealized influence behavior	-.06	-.07	-.05	-.06	.20**	.38**	.38**	.33**	.34**	.62**	-		
12. Intellectual stimulation	-.06	.00	-.18*	-.02	.21**	.43**	.24**	.43**	.35**	.54**	.51**	-	
13. Individualized consideration	.01	-.10	-.02	-.03	.21**	.37**	.36**	.32**	.55**	.46**	.53**	.52**	-
Mean	52	.89	.86	.97	5.83	7.13	8.08	7.24	7.57	3.25	3.41	3.00	3.20
SD	9.25	.32	.34	.16	2.42	1.52	.87	1.44	1.30	.60	.52	.62	.59
Reliability coefficient	-	-	-	-	.71	.84	.74	.83	.85	.78	.69	.81	.77

Note. Cronbach's α used to assess reliability of all scales, except for socially desirable responding which was assessed with Guttman's Spilt-Half Coefficient due to the dichotomous nature of this scale. Gender coded as 0 = *female*, 1 = *male;* Race coded as 0 = *non-White*, 1 = *White;* Denomination coded as *0= Roman Catholic, 1 = Protestant.* * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

felt-authenticity role score). Within each of these levels, the within-subject factor is Behavior-in-Role with the measures of abovementioned leadership behaviors analyzed.

For the visionary role, the analysis revealed a significant Behavior-in-Role effect, F (3, 543) = 33.16, $p < .001$, and a Behavior-in-Role X Authenticity-in-Role Level interaction emerged, F (3, 543) = 4.11, $p < .01$. For the positive role model role, the analysis revealed a significant Behavior-in-Role effect, F (3, 543) = 32.84, $p < .001$. For the champion of change role, the analysis revealed a significant Behavior-in-Role effect, F (3, 543) = 32.64, $p < .001$. For the coach/mentor role, the analysis revealed a significant Behavior-in-Role effect, F (3, 543) = 33.01, $p < .001$. Consistent with Hypothesis 2, these results indicate that faith community leaders display different transformational leadership behaviors within each role and slightly different patterns of behaviors across roles.

This is demonstrated in Table 3, which presents mean differences in transformational leadership behaviors across roles for faith community leaders possessing low and high levels of felt authenticity within each role. For the behaviors within each level of felt authenticity within each role, we used a series of Bonferroni multiple pairwise comparison tests with a .01 significance criteria for exploratory analyses (Keppel & Wickens, 2004) to compare each pair of means. A review of Table 3 indicates two interesting results. First, leaders reported displaying significantly lower levels of intellectual stimulation relative to the other three components of transformational leadership behaviors across roles. Second, leaders consistently reported demonstrating significantly higher levels of idealized influence behavior relative to the other transformational leadership behaviors across roles.

Next we tested Hypothesis 3, that specific role authenticities would be associated with their related behavioral component of transformational leadership. Table 4 presents results of partial correlation analysis between faith community leaders' self-reports of role authenticity for the visionary, positive role model, champion of change, and coach/mentor roles and the four behavioral components of transformational leadership, partialing out the effects of demographic variables including age, gender, race, denomination, and socially desirable responding.

In support of Hypothesis 3, faith community leaders' felt authenticity was significantly related to the corresponding transformational leadership behavior across all roles with one exception. Specifically, felt authenticity in the visionary role was significantly and positively related to inspirational motivation ($r = .29$, $p < .01$), but *not* to the other transformational leadership behaviors. Furthermore, felt authenticity in the positive role model role was significantly and positively related to idealized influence behavior ($r = .13$, $p < .05$), but *not* to the other transformational leadership behaviors. Finally, felt authenticity in the coach/ mentor role was significantly and positively related to individualized consideration ($r = .28$, $p < .01$), but *not* to the other transformational leadership behaviors. Contrary to Hypothesis 3, felt authenticity in the champion of change role was *not* significantly related to intellectual stimulation ($r = .06$, *ns*), but was significantly and *negatively* related to both inspirational motivation ($r = -.16$, $p < .05$) and individualized consideration ($r = -.22$, $p < .01$).

Table 3. Means for the Behavioral Components of Transformational Leadership in Four Different Roles (N = 184 focal leaders)

Behavior	Visionary Role authenticity		Positive Role Model Role authenticity		Champion of Change Role authenticity		Coach/Mentor Role authenticity	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Inspirational motivation	$.94_b$	$.50_a$	$.08_b$	$.39_b$	$.99_b$	$.43_b$	$.97_b$	$.42_a$
Idealized influence	$.24_a$	$.54_a$	$.21_a$	$.58_a$	$.19_a$	$.56_a$	$.22_a$	$.52_a$
Intellectual stimulation	$.75_c$	$.20_c$	$.87_c$	$.10_c$	$.73_c$	$.19_c$	$.76_b$	$.14_b$
Individualized consideration	$.00_b$	$.36_b$	$.00_b$	$.37_b$	$.97_b$	$.37_b$	$.88_b$	$.40_a$

Note. High and low levels of role authenticity based on median splits of the specific role authenticity measure. Within columns, means not sharing alphabetic subscripts are significantly different from each other at the .01 level. Within rows for each role, all means in the high role authenticity group are significantly ($p < .05$) greater than those in the low role authenticity group.

Table 4. Partial correlations of Role Authenticity Measures with the Behavioral Components of Transformational Leadership

Behavior within role	Role's authenticity
Visionary	
Inspirational motivation	.29**
Idealized influence	.01
Intellectual stimulation	.06
Individualized consideration	-.11
Positive role model	
Inspirational motivation	-.06
Idealized influence	.13*
Intellectual stimulation	-.10
Individualized consideration	.05
Champion of change	
Inspirational motivation	-.16*
Idealized influence	-.10
Intellectual stimulation	.06
Individualized consideration	-.22**
Coach/Mentor	
Inspirational motivation	-.10
Idealized influence	-.01
Intellectual stimulation	-.04
Individualized consideration	.28**

Note. Partial correlations control for leader age, gender, race, denomination and socially desirable responding. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Discussion

Responding to recent calls to examine authentic leadership processes for specific leadership behaviors in specific contexts (Gardner et al., 2005; Sosik, 2006), this study offers a fresh look at combining self-construal and social-contextual accounts of authentic transformational leadership by asking whether felt authenticity across roles differs and influences the behavior a leader chooses to demonstrate. In answer, we offer and provide empirical support for a theoretical explanation of authentic transformational leadership by demonstrating associations between felt authenticity across roles and transformational leadership behavior for leaders of Christian faith communities.

The first theoretically interesting finding of this study is that there was systematic variation in the level of authenticity experienced by faith community leaders with authenticity in the positive role model role being felt most strongly. This finding is consistent with social-contextual perspectives of self-construals (e.g., Hogg, 2003) and personality (Sheldon et al., 1997), in which individuals are expected to feel comfortable in roles that are a true expression of their self and personality within a social context. Indeed, Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) highlighted the importance of role modeling for authentic

transformational leaders in all contexts. In faith community contexts, leaders are expected to role model teachings and beliefs for followers and feel authentic in this role (Roozen & Neiman, 2005), and findings from this study supported this expectation.

A second major finding of this study was that faith community leaders consistently demonstrated higher levels of idealized influence behavior compared to the other behavioral components of transformational leadership across all roles and levels of felt authenticity as shown in Table 3. This result is consistent with research on church leadership (Schaefer, 2003; Yount, 2008) suggesting that being a role model in the faith community is a requirement emphasized in many scriptural passages and expected by society. Moreover, intellectual stimulation was generally least likely to be displayed by faith community leaders across all roles except the coach/mentor role. This result is consistent with results reported by Powell (2009) that church leaders felt that it is not their primary role to question assumptions of their follower's faith, introduce radical changes in the church, or develop new visions of faith for followers. These results confirm conclusions of reviews of the leadership literature (e.g., Antonakis et al., 2003; Bass, 2008) that context is important in understanding the frequency of displays of different transformational leadership behaviors.

Specifically, this result differs from displays of the behavioral components of transformational leadership in non-faith community contexts. For example, using another sample with 672 cases from business organizations across 13 industries in the U.S. (Zhu, Riggio, Avolio, & Sosik, in press), we found that leader's display of inspiration motivation ($M = 2.84$, $SD = .97$) is significantly higher than idealized influence ($M = 2.63$, $SD = .93$, $t(671) = 11.42$, $p < .01$), intellectual stimulation ($M = 2.54$, $SD = 1.02$, $t(671) = 12.56$, $p < .01$), and individualized consideration ($M = 2.58$, $SD = 1.00$, $t(671) = 10.99$, $p < .01$). This suggests that business leaders may consider articulating and communicating a strategic vision, and motivating followers as more critical and important behaviors for them compared to other leadership behaviors. This preliminary result will require further research to explore the plausibility of this explanation. The difference in results between the faith community and business samples further highlights the importance of context in leadership studies.

A third important finding in this study involved the roles generally found to be related with the relevant behavioral component of transformational leadership required for the role. After controlling for faith community leaders' socially desirable responding, age, gender, race, and denomination, the more leaders felt authentic in the visionary role, the more they displayed inspirational motivation. The more leaders felt authentic in the positive role model role, the more they displayed idealized influence behavior. And the more leaders felt authentic in the coach/mentor role, the more they displayed individualized consideration. These results concur with prior theorizing of positive psychologists (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Peterson & Seligman, 2004) and authentic leadership researchers (Gardner et al., 2005), according to which the authenticity and autonomy in suitable roles are associated with the display of self-expressive behaviors. They also concur with empirically-supported theories of self-concordance (Sheldon, 2002) and felt authenticity (Sheldon et al., 1997), which suggest the importance of role authenticity in behaving in ways that feel personally expressive and achieving one's personal goals. Results of the current study suggest that

felt authenticity in specific roles appears to enable faith community leaders to meet their goals of displaying transformational leadership behaviors appropriate for the roles.

On the basis of our assumption that cross-role variations in behavior are in part caused by cross-role variations in sense of authenticity, we had expected that felt authenticity in the role of champion of change would be associated with intellectual stimulation. In contrast, after controlling for the abovementioned covariates, we failed to find this linkage, but did find *negative* associations between felt authenticity in the champion of change role and both inspirational motivation and individualized consideration. As Powell (2009) suggested, perhaps Christian faith community leaders do not value the role of champion of change. They may feel uncomfortable challenging church members to question their personal assumptions about faith, or introducing church reform, especially during economic crises, dwindling memberships and weekly collections, and cultural shifts toward secularism (Roozen & Neiman, 2005).

It still remains an open question why felt authenticity in champion of change role is associated with lower levels of inspirational motivation and individualized consideration displayed by faith community leaders. One explanation is that seeing oneself as a pathfinder involves introducing change at the church level by building administrative implementation plans for an existing vision (Powell, 2009). This focus is likely to shift a faith community leader's attention away from catering to the individual needs of members and engaging in the evangelical and missionary work toward administrative tasks. Another explanation is that despite feeling very authentic in advocating change, Christian faith community leaders are required to use rational rather than inspirational and personal means to introduce change, given the current economic, social, and cultural challenges facing contemporary churches (Roozen & Neiman, 2005). Future research is required to better answer this question.

Practical Implications

In addition to its contribution to theory, this study provides insight into authentic transformational leadership processes, especially regarding the importance of role identities for leaders in faith community contexts. To the extent that the identity of positive role model is valued in faith communities, measures of felt authenticity in this role can be used in pastor identification, screening, and selection when new leaders are required to fill vacant posts. However, this implication may not apply in denominations where the church hierarchy assigns pastors to their posts. For example, Catholic priests are assigned to their churches by the diocese. In addition, the measures of felt authenticity in transformational leadership roles may be used by leadership development trainers and consultants working with ministers and pastors to address issues of self-awareness. Self-awareness and self-reflection are important authentic leadership development tools (Luthans & Avolio, 2003) that can help faith community leaders better understand how to be true to oneself and others. Such an understanding can help them determine what roles, competencies and behaviors they value most, and whether they are a good fit for the faith community leadership roles and positions they hold.

Study Limitations, Future Research Directions, and Conclusion

While this study's strength lies in its within-subjects analyses using reports from leaders in a unique and diverse Christian faith community context, it is not without limitations. First, there are potential biases that occur when self-reporting, subjective measures are used (Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). However, when the theoretical constructs deal with self-evaluation as in the current study, self-report measures can be useful and essential (Howard, 1994). An assessment of one's authenticity in a role may only be determined by the author of one's own behavior (i.e., the self), so self-reports of felt authenticity may be appropriate to the extent that concerns of impression management are not salient. Peterson and Seligman (2004, p. 260) pointed out that Sheldon et al.'s (1997) measure of felt authenticity used in this study does not require respondents to endorse socially desirable responses and therefore makes impression management concerns less salient. Nevertheless, we controlled for faith community leaders' socially desirable responding in our analyses to further allay such concerns. Future research should use self- and others' ratings of authenticity and leadership behavior to provide more objective and independent measures of these constructs.

Second, we were not able to collect matched data for church members' ratings of their pastor's leadership behavior and outcome measures for the church and its members. It would be interesting and helpful for future studies to examine the effects that felt authenticity across roles have on church members' beliefs, motivation, and self-esteem levels, as well as church-level variables such as attendance, weekly collections, membership, outreach activities, and financial condition. Third, data were collected at one point in time and therefore conclusions about the casual direction of relationships between the study variables cannot be drawn. It would be important for future studies to use longitudinal and/or experimental designs that temporally separate study variables so that causal inferences can be drawn.

Finally, although we collected data from a wide range of Christian churches and Christianity is the dominant religion in the U.S. (Roozen & Neiman, 2005), we should note that our sample excludes other important religions such as Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. While the profile of pastors in our sample was similar to that reported in Powell (2009) in terms of age, tenure as leader, and gender, we recognize that there is a trend toward increased diversity in church leadership that needs to be examined in future research extending to non-Christian faith communities in other nations.

In conclusion, leadership studies have been criticized for missing the contextual elements that embed leaders and followers (Bass, 2008; Yukl, 2010) and authentic leadership scholars have called for examining the contextual influences on leaders and followers (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). Results of the current study suggest that specific role identities associated with transformational leadership are dynamic and may be a function of leadership contexts. Felt authenticity may help to explain why leaders display different behaviors in different leadership roles or contexts. Our results also suggest that a role level of analysis of authenticity may provide important information beyond a person level of analysis in authentic leadership studies because of the within-person differences of authenticity across roles reported in this study. Thus, authentic transformational leadership may require leaders to discover the right role that reflects their true self and to behave in ways that expresses who they truly are.

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