MA TE MATAURANGA KA MOHIO MA TE MOHIO KA TUTUKI

WITH KNOWLEDGE COMES UNDERSTANDING.

WITH UNDERSTANDING COMES APPLICATION
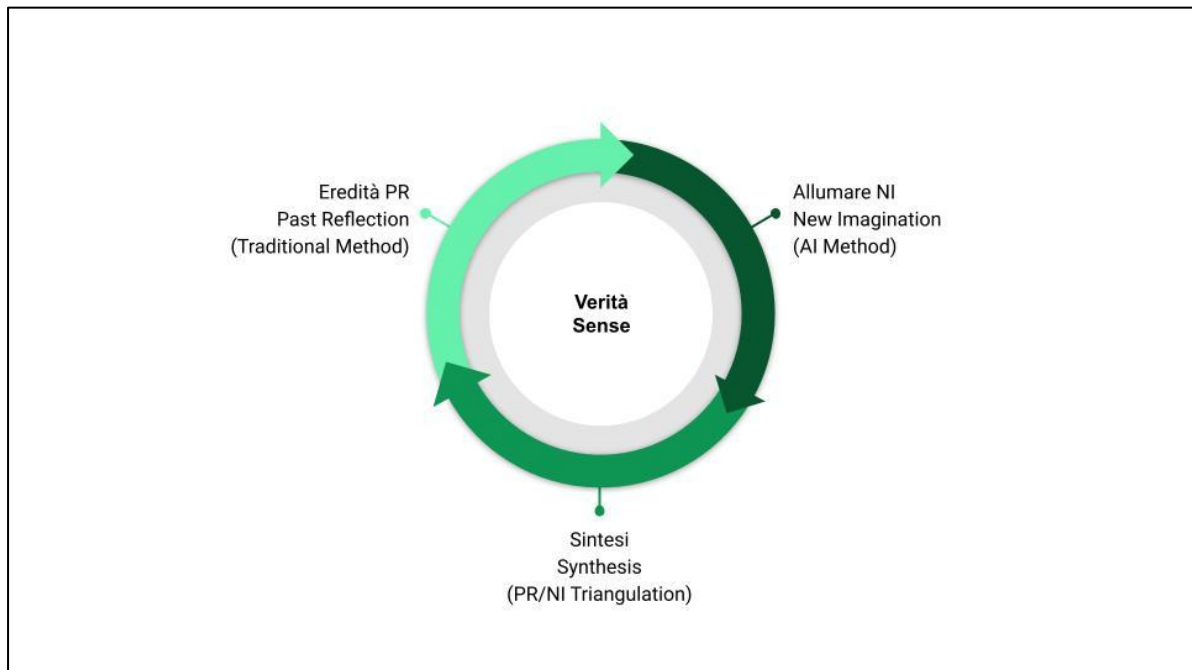
WORKING PAPER 4

VERIFICATION (PRACTICAL SELF/ INTERPERSONAL SELF-AUTHENTICATION)

IS DONALD TRUMP AUTHENTIC?

2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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VERITÀ SENSE AI APPROACH

This paper is written using the **Verità Sense AI approach designed by drobertdavis.com Verità Sense AI by drrobertdavis.com.** The name "Verità Sense AI" presents a distinctive option for an artificial intelligence platform focused on qualitative data analysis, combining linguistic elements that convey truth-finding capabilities with modern technological positioning.

"Verità Sense AI" combines three powerful conceptual elements that together create a coherent and meaningful identity. "Verità," the Italian word for "truth," immediately establishes a foundation of authenticity and reliability—core values essential for any analysis platform. The term "Sense" suggests perceptive capabilities, the ability to detect patterns and meanings that might escape conventional analysis methods. This aligns perfectly with the promise of AI-enhanced qualitative analysis: technology that can understand and interpret nuanced human expressions and unstructured data. When paired with "Verità," it creates the compelling concept of "truth perception" or "truth sensing"—exactly what researchers seek from analysis tools.

The "AI" component clearly positions the product within the artificial intelligence space, making its technological foundation immediately apparent to potential users. This straightforward element requires no interpretation and helps categorize the product in the rapidly expanding market of AI research tools. The initial 3 components of Verità Sense are:

1. Eredità PR Past Reflection (Traditional Method)
2. Allumare NI New Imagination (AI Method)
3. Sintesi Synthesis (PR/NI Triangulation)

The essential conjoint place of these components is the researcher. The source of the data: from direct interview to machine created. Quality in. Quality out. Ma Te Matauranga Ka Mohio. Ma Te Mohio Ka Tutuki (Creating Knowledge. Designing Understanding. Cocreating Application)

ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to provide some initial evidence to determine voter perceptions of the authenticity of Donald Trump at the 2016 USA Presidential Election. The leadership brand Trump (DJT). This paper posits a model that authenticity is a voter experience. It is a cognitive event of a voter who consumes presidential leadership. Hence, authenticity can be manipulated in different contexts (e.g., digital environments). Authenticity, while believes in what is real and original; this is entirely real but also subjective. Subjectivity based upon the context of the voter as a hermeneutic interpretive state.

These series of papers will cover different aspects of the result in a phased output process. It is hypothesized that when consumers engage in the consumption behavior of the political brand (e.g., Trump), authenticity is a multidimensional experience conceptualized and defined as: iconic, identification, practical/impersonal, production/situation, social, moral, pure approximate and virtuous-self, forms of the authentic experience.

FOR VERIFICATION:

Overall, 63% of Trump voters rated highly in terms of Verification in Practical Self/ Interpersonal Self-Authentication. Consistent with this overall result, voters strongly argued that they I paid attention to what was stated by the leader so I could; evaluate their party, determine the attributes and benefits of their party, rate the quality of their party and determine what their party had to offer.

However, in terms of the Verification component of Authenticity there were divergent results for leader's party contributors in terms of; know things I don't know and, have high integrity. While 58% and 50% were supporting of these aspects on the leader's party contributors, an approximately equal number either disagreed or were unsure (42% and 50%). This signals that the leaders party contributors mostly likely have a significant effect on the perception of a leader's authenticity.

The results align with self-verification theory, revealing that 63% of Trump voters engage in practical self-authentication by evaluating his leadership through policy alignment and functional utility, using his rhetoric to validate their self-concepts (e.g., as anti-establishment or patriotic). However, perceptions of authenticity diverge regarding his party contributors: while 58% and 50% affirmed their expertise and integrity, nearly equal proportions disagreed or were unsure, highlighting a leader-party asymmetry. This split suggests Trump's personalized, symbolic authenticity (e.g., "outsider" defiance) resonates more powerfully than institutional trust in his allies, whom voters may compartmentalize as part of the "system" he critiques. Supporters likely rationalize contradictions through motivated skepticism, prioritizing Trump's identity-affirming traits over party contributors' perceived flaws, thereby preserving their self-concept as anti-elite reformers. The data underscores a hierarchy in verification standards-voters anchor their political identity in Trump's persona while applying more critical, utilitarian lenses to his party, reflecting self-verification's role in maintaining coherence amid complex electoral dynamics.

initial study was academic and non-commercial in nature. The data collection collaborated with Dr Suze Wilson.

This model and questionnaire is based on the conceptual and measurement model of authenticity published by Robert Davis, Kevin Sheriff, Kim Owen, Conceptualizing and Measuring Consumer Authenticity Online, Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, Volume 47, 2019, Pages 17-31, ISSN 0969-6989, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2018.10.002.

This model, data and measurement outcome using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) achieved and exceeded the required benchmarks for discriminant validity, convergent validity and GoF (Bagozzi and Yi, 2012, Hair et al., 2010, Baumgartner and Homburg, 1996; Bacon et al., 1995; Browne and Cudek, 1993, Bentler, 1990). In this study common method bias was measured using the Harman's single factor test (20–24% of the variance can be explained by the single factor). The test is below the accepted threshold of 50%. The common latent factor (CLF) approach was used to measure the common variance of all the model's observed variables (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The comparison of the standardized regression weights of the non-CLF vs CLF model computed that all were well below 0.200 with the exception of two observed items with differences of 0.253 and 0.212. Therefore, with an acceptable Harman's single factor test and a CLF test with 41 observed variables below the threshold, it is concluded that there is no common method bias.

This dataset is unpublished and is available for further academic publication and/or commercial application. The model, research method and data are Copyright the intellectual property of Dr. Robert Davis. If the results in this paper are to be quoted and/or published in any ways then they must; (1) contact Dr Robert Davis for written approval to publish and (2) effectively cite Dr, Robert Davis at drrobertdavis.com in the publication.

Key Words: Authenticity, Perception, Donald Trump, President, USA, Election, 2016.

RESULTS

VERIFICATION (PRACTICAL SELF/ INTERPERSONAL SELF-AUTHENTICATION)

Overall, 63% of Trump voters rated highly in terms of Verification in Practical Self/ Interpersonal Self-Authentication.

Consistent with this overall result, voters strongly argued that they I paid attention to what was stated by the leader so I could; evaluate their party, determine the attributes and benefits of their party, rate the quality of their party and determine what their party had to offer.

However, in terms of the Verification component of Authenticity there were divergent results for leader's party contributors in terms of; know things I don't know and, have high integrity. While 58% and 50% were supporting of these aspects on the leader's party contributors, an approximately equal number either disagreed or were unsure (42% and 50%). This signals that the leaders party contributors mostly likely have a significant affect on the perception of a leader's authenticity.

I paid attention to what was stated by the leader so I could evaluate their party. [13-13-13V1]
Is donald trump authentic? INDEPENDANT JUDGEMENT
2016 presidential election united states of america
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Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
4	7	54	81	92

I paid attention to what was stated by the leader so that I could determine the attributes of their party. [146-14V2]
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Response	Value
Strongly Disagree	7
Somewhat Disagree	13
Neither Agree nor Disagree	46
Somewhat Agree	88
Strongly Agree	84

I did pay attention to what was stated by the leader so that I can determine the benefits of their party. [15-79-15V3R]
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Response	Value
Strongly Disagree	34
Somewhat Disagree	25
Neither Agree nor Disagree	60
Somewhat Agree	51
Strongly Agree	68

I paid attention to what was stated by the leader so that I could rate the quality of their party. [103-16V4]
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Response	Value
Strongly Disagree	4
Somewhat Disagree	6
Neither Agree nor Disagree	61
Somewhat Agree	79
Strongly Agree	88

I paid attention to what was stated by the leader so that I could determine what their party had to offer. [105-17V5]
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Response	Value
Strongly Disagree	9
Somewhat Disagree	11
Neither Agree nor Disagree	43
Somewhat Agree	84
Strongly Agree	91

I trust the leader's party contributors to know things I don't know. [138-18V6]
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Category	Value
Strongly Disagree	11
Somewhat Disagree	16
Neither Agree nor Disagree	74
Somewhat Agree	77
Strongly Agree	60

Contributors to the leader's party have high integrity. [131-19V7]
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Category	Value
Strongly Disagree	14
Somewhat Disagree	20
Neither Agree nor Disagree	85
Somewhat Agree	52
Strongly Agree	67

Overall Percent
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RESULTS INTERPRETATION: VERIFICATION (PRACTICAL SELF/ INTERPERSONAL SELF-AUTHENTICATION)

The data aligns closely with self-verification theory's predictions while revealing nuanced tensions between **practical self-authentication** and **perceptions of authenticity** in political leadership. Here's how the results map onto the theoretical framework:

Practical Self/Interpersonal Authentication (63% Agreement Overall)

The high agreement here reflects voters' use of Trump's leadership as a tool for **self-concept validation**:

- **Evaluating party alignment**: Voters scrutinize Trump's statements to assess whether his policies and rhetoric align with their self-view (e.g., as "anti-establishment" or "patriotic"). This process mirrors self-verification's emphasis on seeking congruence between external feedback (Trump's messaging) and internal identity.

- **Functional utility**: By determining "what their party had to offer," voters engage in **instrumental verification**-assessing whether Trump's leadership meets their pragmatic goals (e.g., economic protectionism, judicial appointments). This satisfies the "practical self" dimension, where policy outcomes serve as evidence of leadership efficacy.

Divergent Authenticity Verification (58% and 50% Agreement)

The split in perceptions of the leader's party contributors (*know things I don't know* and *high integrity*) highlights two critical dynamics:

1. **Leader vs. Party Asymmetry**:

   o Trump's authenticity is often framed as **personalized** (e.g., his "outsider" persona), while party contributors are judged through **institutional** lenses. Supporters may verify Trump's authenticity independently of his party, viewing him as a disruptor of entrenched systems (including his own party's establishment).

   o The near-even disagreement/uncertainty (42% and 50%) suggests that party actors lack the symbolic resonance of Trump himself, failing to align with voters' self-concepts as "anti-elite" or "anti-corruption."

2. **Motivated Skepticism**:
   Self-verification theory predicts that voters will discount information threatening their self-concept. If party contributors are perceived as part of a "swamp" Trump vowed to drain, supporters may:

o **Compartmentalize**: Affirm Trump's authenticity while dismissing his allies as necessary compromises (e.g., "he's fighting the system from within").

o **Rationalize contradictions**: Attribute disagreements to "deep state" interference or media bias, preserving Trump's integrity as a self-verification anchor.

Implications for Leadership Perception

- **Symbolic vs. Practical Authenticity**: Trump's supporters prioritize **symbolic authenticity** (e.g., defiance of norms) over **technical competence** ("know things I don't know"). This reflects self-verification's focus on identity congruence rather than objective expertise.

- **Integrity as a Contested Metric**: The 50% uncertainty about contributors' integrity underscores how partisan identity moderates' moral judgments. For instance, actions deemed corrupt by outsiders may be reframed as "strategic" by supporters to maintain self-concept consistency.

Synthesis with Self-Verification Theory

These results illustrate how voters **hierarchically apply verification standards**:

1. **Primary verification**: Trump's leadership is assessed through identity-affirming criteria (e.g., "America First" rhetoric).

2. **Secondary verification**: Party contributors are evaluated via utilitarian or moral lenses, which are more susceptible to dissonance due to their weaker symbolic ties to voters' self-concepts.

This hierarchy allows supporters to maintain coherent political identities even amid intra-party skepticism-a testament to the theory's explanatory power in complex electoral ecosystems.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF VOTER VERIFICATION IN POLITICAL

LEADERSHIP: A CASE STUDY OF DONALD TRUMP SUPPORTERS [i]

The phenomenon of voters cognitively engaging with political figures to verify leadership standards and achieve self-authentication is rooted in a confluence of psychological theories. This report synthesizes insights from **self-verification theory**, **symbolic self-completion theory**, and **motivated reasoning** to explain how supporters of Donald Trump employ cognitive strategies to align his leadership with their self-concepts and personal goals. By examining these frameworks, we uncover the mechanisms driving political identity reinforcement, the role of symbolic validation, and the cognitive processes that sustain belief systems in the face of contradictory evidence.

Self-Verification Theory and Political Identity Reinforcement

Self-verification theory, pioneered by William Swann, posits that individuals seek to confirm their preexisting self-concepts through social interactions and environmental feedback[1][2]. For voters, this manifests as a desire to align their perceptions of political leaders with their own self-views. Trump supporters, particularly those with strong ideological or identity-based investments in his rhetoric, engage in **selective information processing** to maintain coherence between their self-concept (e.g., "patriotic outsider" or "anti-establishment advocate") and Trump's leadership narrative[3][4].

Cognitive Mechanisms of Verification

1. **Selective Exposure**: Voters gravitate toward media and messaging that reaffirm Trump's alignment with their values, such as his emphasis on nationalism or economic populism[5][6]. This behavior minimizes cognitive dissonance by filtering out dissenting perspectives[5].

2. **Interpretive Biases**: Supporters often reinterpret ambiguous actions (e.g., controversial policy decisions) as evidence of Trump's adherence to their standards. For instance, tariffs framed as "protecting American jobs" may be perceived as fulfilling a promise to prioritize domestic interests[3][4].

3. **Feedback Solicitation**: By participating in rallies or online forums, voters actively seek social validation from like-minded individuals, reinforcing their self-view as members of a cohesive political movement[7][8].

This process is not merely about affirming positive traits; even voters with negative self-views (e.g., feeling marginalized) may seek verification through Trump's adversarial stance toward institutions they perceive as hostile[1][2].

Symbolic Self-Completion and Leadership as a Self-Defining Goal

Symbolic self-completion theory explains how individuals use socially recognized symbols to compensate for perceived deficiencies in their self-concept[9][10]. For Trump supporters, his leadership style and policy positions serve as **self-defining symbols** that validate their identity and aspirations.

Trump as a Symbol of Anti-Establishment Authenticity

- **Rhetorical Symbols**: Phrases like "drain the swamp" and "Make America Great Again" function as shorthand for rejecting political elites, resonating with voters who view themselves as outsiders[9][10].

- **Behavioral Signals**: Trump's unorthodox communication style (e.g., Twitter usage) symbolizes defiance of norms, mirroring supporters' desire to challenge perceived societal decay[9][10].

These symbols allow voters to project their ideals onto Trump, effectively using his persona to "complete" their self-concept as defenders of traditional values or critics of globalization[9][10].

Motivated Reasoning and the Construction of Leadership Standards

Motivated reasoning theory elucidates how voters process information to protect identity-defining beliefs[3][4]. Trump supporters often evaluate his leadership through a **partisan lens**, prioritizing directional goals (e.g., affirming group loyalty) over accuracy goals[4][6].

Case Study: Evaluating Presidential Performance

- **Economic Policies**: Supporters may credit Trump for job growth while attributing inflation to external factors, reflecting a bias toward preserving their positive assessment of his leadership[3][5].

- **Crisis Management**: During the COVID-19 pandemic, politically motivated reasoning led some to downplay public health risks to align with Trump's messaging, emphasizing economic reopening over containment[6].

This cognitive flexibility enables voters to maintain a consistent narrative of Trump's efficacy, even when objective metrics contradict their views[4][6].

The Interplay of Self-Verification and Self-Enhancement

While self-verification drives consistency-seeking, **self-enhancement** (the desire for positive self-views) coexists as a competing motive[1][2]. For Trump supporters with positive self-concepts linked to his success (e.g., "business-savvy conservatives"), verification and

enhancement align. Conversely, those with negative self-views (e.g., economic insecurity) may prioritize verification, accepting Trump's flaws as reflections of their own struggles[11][1].

The Role of Cognitive Dissonance

When confronted with contradictions (e.g., Trump's ethical controversies), voters employ strategies like **rationalization** ("all politicians are corrupt") or **denial** ("fake news") to reconcile discrepancies[5][2]. This preserves both their self-concept and their support for his leadership[5][4].

Conclusion: The Psychology of Political Authentication

The cognitive consumption of Trump's leadership is a multifaceted process where self-verification, symbolic completion, and motivated reasoning intersect. Voters use his persona and policies as tools for self-authentication, reinforcing their identity while navigating the complexities of modern politics. Future research should explore how these mechanisms apply to other populist movements and the long-term implications for democratic engagement. Understanding these dynamics offers policymakers and educators insights into addressing polarization: by framing messages in ways that resonate with voters' self-concepts, it may be possible to bridge divides without triggering defensive reasoning[4][6].

HOW DOES SELF-VERIFICATION THEORY EXPLAIN VOTER BEHAVIOR

Self-verification theory provides a robust framework for understanding voter behavior by explaining how individuals align political choices with their self-concepts to maintain psychological consistency. Here's how it operates in the context of electoral decisions:

Core Mechanisms of Self-Verification in Voting

1. **Identity Reinforcement**:
   Voters seek leaders and policies that mirror their self-views, whether positive or negative. For example:

   o A voter who identifies as an *anti-establishment outsider* may gravitate toward candidates like Donald Trump, whose rhetoric ("drain the swamp") symbolically validates this self-concept[12][13].

   o Those with negative self-views (e.g., feeling economically marginalized) may subconsciously prefer leaders who frame struggles as systemic failures, reinforcing their identity as victims of external forces[12][14].

2. **Selective Information Processing**:

o **Attention bias**: Voters disproportionately consume media affirming their political identity (e.g., conservative outlets for Trump supporters)[13].

o **Interpretive bias**: Ambiguous events (e.g., policy outcomes) are filtered through partisan lenses. A Trump supporter might credit him for economic gains while attributing inflation to global factors, preserving their self-view as informed voters[14][13].

3. **Social Validation Loops**:
   Participation in rallies, online forums, or partisan groups creates echo chambers that reinforce self-verification. For instance, Trump's "Make America Great Again" rallies function as identity-affirming spaces where supporters collectively validate their shared self-concept as patriots[14][13].

Self-Verification vs. Self-Enhancement

While self-enhancement drives voters toward candidates who flatter their self-image (e.g., "smart" voters backing "smart" policies), self-verification prioritizes consistency:

- **For voters with positive self-concepts**: These motives align. A self-identified "fiscal conservative" may support Trump's tax cuts, enhancing their self-view while verifying their ideological identity[12][13].

- **For voters with negative self-concepts**: Self-verification dominates. A person who feels socially dismissed may embrace Trump's adversarial style, interpreting his confrontational tactics as validation of their own marginalized status[12][14].

Behavioral Outcomes in Electoral Contexts

- **Voter Turnout**: Framing voting as an identity ("being a voter") rather than an action ("voting") increases participation by tying the act to self-concept[15]. This explains why Trump's messaging-emphasizing group identity ("patriots," "silent majority")-resonates powerfully[15][14].

- **Persistence of Misinformation Beliefs**: Voters may cling to debunked claims (e.g., election fraud narratives) if rejecting them threatens their self-view as vigilant defenders of democracy[13].

Case Study: Trump Supporters and Cognitive Dissonance

When confronted with contradictions (e.g., Trump's legal controversies), self-verification drives supporters to:

1. **Rationalize** ("all politicians are corrupt") to preserve their self-concept as realistic critics of the system.

2. **Reject dissenting information** through confirmation bias, dismissing critical media as "fake news"[13].

Implications for Political Strategy

Campaigns leveraging self-verification principles can:

- Use identity-laden language (nouns like "patriot" over verbs like "support") to deepen voter engagement[15].

- Craft policies as symbolic extensions of voters' self-concepts (e.g., "economic nationalism" for those prioritizing American exceptionalism)[14].

By recognizing these dynamics, researchers and policymakers can better address polarization and design interventions that respect voters' need for self-concept stability while fostering factual engagement.

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WHY IS ATHENTICITY IMPORTANT IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP? [ii]

The aim of this research is to measure the perception of authentic political leadership (Singh, Ratchford, & Prasad, 2014; Ertimur and Gilly, 2012). In contemporary politics, perceived authenticity has emerged as a critical factor in political leadership, influencing voter trust, election outcomes, and democratic accountability. Research shows authenticity has become as important as traditional leadership qualities like competence and integrity in shaping public perception of politicians.

Perceived authenticity significantly influences voting behavior. When politicians are seen as authentic, voters are more likely to support them at the ballot box [3]. This author argues that:

1. This relationship is especially pronounced among voters who explicitly value authenticity as an important factor in their decision-making.

2. Recent elections demonstrate this effect: Donald Trump's perceived authenticity advantage contributed to his 2024 presidential victory, while Kamala Harris faced criticism for an "authenticity gap".

3. Similarly, Ed Davey's success in expanding Liberal Democrat representation in the 2024 UK election has been attributed to his authentic self-portrayal.

Political authenticity comprises three key dimensions that voters evaluate:

1. Consistency - Politicians appear authentic when their actions align with their stated views over time and they fulfill campaign promises regardless of political pressure [2] [5]. Research shows candidates who consistently implement their campaign promises are considered more authentic than those who renege under pressure [3].

2. Ordinariness - Leaders are perceived as authentic when they appear down-to-earth and unlike typical politicians [2] [4]. This dimension contradicts the image of calculated politicians acting on strategic motives rather than true convictions [5].

3. Immediacy - Authenticity is associated with spontaneity and actions driven by personal convictions rather than strategic calculation [5]. Politicians seem authentic.

Authenticity is particularly important for citizens with lower levels of political trust [4]. In an era of declining faith in political institutions, authenticity offers a pathway to reconnect with disillusioned voters. Those who distrust traditional politics place greater emphasis on politicians being "in touch with ordinary people" rather than displaying conventional political attributes like being "clever" or "dressing well" [4].

The growing importance of authenticity reflects a broader shift in political culture:

1. Rejection of traditional political performance - Citizens increasingly distrust polished, scripted political communication, preferring leaders who break with conventional political norms [4].

2. Rise of populism - Populist leaders like Trump, Duterte, and Bolsonaro have capitalized on authenticity by positioning themselves as political outsiders who represent "common folk" against corrupt elites [4].

3. Diversified authenticity styles - Different authenticity strategies can succeed, from populist outsiders to "everyday celebrity politicians" like Boris Johnson or Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez who cultivate relatable images through social media and casual presentations [4].

Authentic leadership enhances effectiveness by increasing followers' identification with leaders [1]. When politicians are perceived as true to themselves, it helps citizens connect with their message and vision, potentially improving governance outcomes through stronger leader-follower relationships. Perceived authenticity has become a crucial dimension of political leadership that can determine electoral success, enhance voter trust, and strengthen democratic accountability in an era of increasing political skepticism.

ONLINE INFLUENCES [iii]

It is crucial to develop a model of authenticity in political leadership that considers online voter behavior. Voters struggle to determine whether a leader is genuine through traditional means. While offline, voters can directly interact with politicians at events and personally experience their authenticity through face-to-face engagement [4] [10], online they must rely on mediated experiences of authenticity-created through social media, videos, and digital interactions-to drive their political support [2] [3].

Although political authenticity has been extensively studied in political science literature, there's limited work conceptualizing and measuring authentic experience in digital contexts [3] [4]. Little is known about how online political authenticity relates to established concepts like voter decision-making and engagement behavior [7], including how candidates' personal brand, communication style, and community interaction affect perceptions. This knowledge gap creates confusion for both researchers and campaign strategists [3].

What's concerning is that misunderstanding digital authenticity creates opportunities for manipulation and misrepresentation in political spaces [11] [12]. Online, politicians and voters are separated physically and temporally, with limited opportunities to build genuine relationships [7]. The digital environment's anonymity gives rise to potential deception, making it difficult for voters to distinguish between truly authentic candidates and those merely performing authenticity [3] [7].

Research shows that citizens judge politicians' authenticity based on three key dimensions: ordinariness (appearing down-to-earth), consistency (alignment between actions and views), and immediacy (seeming unscripted) [4] [5] [10]. Perceived authenticity significantly influences voting intentions and is especially important to citizens with lower political trust [10]. In political contexts, authenticity is a multidimensional experience that emerges through various forms of engagement-including how candidates present themselves as ordinary people unlike typical politicians, demonstrate consistency in their values, and engage directly with voters through seemingly unscripted interactions [10]. Politicians increasingly use social media for self-presentation techniques to appear genuine to constituents [2], yet these efforts may be perceived differently based on factors like gender and communication style [2]. This complex relationship between political authenticity and voter behavior demands further investigation, particularly as AI and deepfake technologies threaten to erode trust in digital political communication [11] [12].

DEFINING AUTHENTICITY [iv]

Authenticity is defined as the consumers' experience of authentic consumption (Beverland and Farrelly, 2010). See Table 1. Beverland (2005) argues that consumers are offered authenticity through sincere messages to convince them rationally and experientially of the item's commitment to tradition, passion for craft, and production excellence. Authenticity is a subjective evaluation of genuineness attributed to an object by a consumer (Napoli, et al., 2013). Tourists collecting artefacts believe that the authenticity of an item is found in the article being constructed by a craftsman of a particular tribe and being for a specific purpose,

whereas others find authenticity in mass produced (iconic) representations of the original object (Cohen and Cohen, 2012).

Authenticity may be based on sincerity, innocence and originality (Fine, 2003), or being simple, honest and natural (Boyle, 2003). It may be related to the genuineness, reality, or truth of the object or experience (Grayson and Martinec, 2004). It can be based on a product being true to its heritage, using traditional modes of production (Beverland, 2005). Furthermore, authenticity can infuse the item or experience with a set of values that differentiate it from other, more commercialized, brands. Grayson and Martinec (2004) demonstrate that, ultimately, consumers use different cues to assess different kinds of authenticity for different effects (p.297). For example, drawing on historical associations, authenticity has been shown to be central to consumer roles within subcultures, for example as experienced in classic car clubs (Leigh, Peters and Shelton, 2006). Historical associations have also been found in communication strategies building brand authenticity with luxury wine makers (Beverland, 2005).

Therefore, the authentic consumption experience is a multi-dimensional construct made up concurrently of various states of consciousness (sub-constructs). For example: existential, (intra-personal and interpersonal) (Wang, 1999), iconic, indexical and hypothetical (Grayson and Martinec, 2004), self-referential and hyper-authentic (Rose and Wood, 2005), objective and constructive (Leigh, Peters and Shelton, 2006), pure, approximate and moral (Beverland, et al., 2008), control, connection and virtue (Beverland and Farrelly, 2010), and hot and cool (Cohen and Cohen, 2012). This definition is supported in different contexts, such as goods and services (Bruner, 1994; Grayson and Martinec, 2004), food and beverage (Beverland, 2005; Beverland, et al., 2008), tourism (Cohen, 1988; Cohen and Cohen, 2012; MacCannell, 1973; Wang, 1999), reality television (Rose and Wood, 2005), subcultures (Leigh, Peters and Shelton, 2006), and advertising (Chiu, Hsieh, and Kuo, 2012).

Table 1 shows the sub-constructs that define authenticity in the conceptual model. Based upon this table and citations it is summarised that in the online consumption experience consumers need to feel connection to the original time of manufacture through the brand (*Time Origin*). Online consumption experiences also revolve around connection and identification with everyday people through the community (*Everyday People*). Often consumers on and offline through the service will seek positive first hand experience of the item to assists them in achieving personal goals of practical self-authentication (*First Hand Experience*). The community's independent judgment will also assist this process of self-authentication (*Independent Judgment*). They are then able, through focusing on the brand consumption, to make judgements about performance or best value for money (*Instrumentality*) and community interactions to allow for required standards to be tested (*Verification*).

Personal self-authentication is achieved by focusing on the service market leader (*Ubiquity*), its community (*Brand Proximity*) and its shared laws of governance (*Communal Norms*). Consumers online tend to create experience from the brand situation and production through their experience of the brand's script (*Scripted Narrative*), fantasy image (*Situation Fantasy*) and product experience (*Self-Relevant Goals*). Online, consumers need to make judgements about the authenticity of the original article through the brand (*Objective*). The service helps in this process as it often projects onto the brand imagery, expectations, preferences, beliefs, and powers (*Constructive*). Consumers also project their own values onto the brand (*Consumer Values*) and brand values assist the consumer to achieve moral self-authentication (*Brand Values*). Authentic brand consumption experiences are enhanced when the consumer feels involved with the creators of the brand (*Commitment to Tradition*) and its place of manufacture (*Place of Origin*). Authenticity is supported if the brand is guaranteed to be genuine (*Guarantee of Being Genuine*) and often the online service itself

has official laws of governance (*Universal Norms*) as well as community-based morals that are consistently applied (*Purity of Motive*).

TABLE 1.   DEFINING AUTHENTICITY

Type	Construct	Definition	Authors
Iconic: Authentic reproduction of the original.	Time Origin	A feeling of connection to the original time of manufacture.	Grayson and Martinec (2004)
Identification: Identifying elements of authenticity in fantasy.	Everyday People	Consumers connect/identify with everyday people.	Rose & Wood (2005)
Practical Self/ Interpersonal Self-Authentication: Where self-referential behaviors reveal the consumers true self.	First Hand Experience	A positive first hand experience of the item assists the consumer to achieve personal goals of practical self-authentication.	Beverland and Farrelly (2010)
	Independent Judgment	The independent judgment of other consumers of the item assists the consumer to achieve personal goals of practical self-authentication.	
	Instrumentality	Best performing or best value for money item or experience assists the consumer to achieve personal goals of practical self-authentication.	
	Verification	Testing to establish that required standards are met assists consumers to achieve personal goals of practical self-authentication.	
	Ubiquity	Mainstream, mass brands, or a "market leader" assist the consumer to achieve goals of inter-personal self-authentication.	
	Brand Proximity	Being close to you or part of your social community assists the consumer to achieve goals of inter-personal self-authentication.	Leigh, Peters, & Shelton (2006)
	Communal Norms	Laws that govern the community's Behaviour in everyday life assist the consumer to achieve goals of inter-personal self-authentication.	
	Scripted Narrative	Scripted narrative assists the consumer to construct production authenticity.	

Production/Situation: Consumers blend situations and production to construct authenticity from fantasy.	Situation Fantasy	Fantasy situations provide the consumer indexical elements with which he/she can construct situation authenticity.	Rose & Wood (2005)
	Self-Relevant Goals	Self-relevant goals of a product/experience assist the consumer to construct situation authenticity.	
Social: Use of product symbolism or self-efficacy to construct authentic personal or social identities.	Objective	Objective authenticity refers to the authenticity of the original article.	Leigh, Peters, & Shelton (2006)
	Constructive	Constructive authenticity refers to the authenticity projected onto objects in terms of their imagery, expectations, preferences, beliefs, powers, etc.	
Moral: Iconicity or indexicality to show higher moral status.	Consumer Values	Consumer values mirrored in the brand.	Beverland, Lindgreen, & Vink (2008)
	Brand Values	Brand values assist the consumer to achieve moral self-authentication.	
Pure Indexical: A factual or spatio-temporal connection to history and commitment and feeling to the original place of manufacture.	Commitment to Tradition	Love of the craft, process, or the involvement of the creators in the production process.	
	Place of Origin	A commitment too, and feeling for, the original place of manufacture.	Grayson and Martinec (2004)
	Guarantee of Being Genuine	An in-situ guarantee of genuineness provided by a recognized authority.	Beverland, Lindgreen, & Vink (2008)
Virtuous Self: Personal goals of virtuosity in self-authentication	Universal Norms	Laws that govern societies, these standards override other considerations.	Beverland and Farrelly (2010)
	Purity of Motive	Consistent application of a set of morals.	

RECENT WORK ˅

Several recent academic papers have explored different aspects of authenticity across various disciplines:

1. 2024 Papers:

    - "Identifying AI-Generated Research Papers: Methods and Considerations" examines techniques for distinguishing between human-authored and AI-generated academic content, including textual analysis, metadata examination, and content evaluation methods [1].

    - "Brand Authenticity: A 21-Year Bibliometric Review" analyzes 880 articles (2003-2023) showing increasing publication trends and identifying research clusters in tourism, food/retail, and marketing/management [2].

    - "AI vs. AI: The Detection Game" evaluates the capabilities of AI content detection systems in identifying whether texts were written by humans or AI, with particular focus on academic integrity applications [3].

2. 2023 Papers:

    - "From authentic assessment to authenticity in assessment" discusses conceptual challenges in assessment planning within education [5].

    - "Always-on authenticity: Challenging the BeReal ideal of 'being real'" examines the social media app BeReal and questions its claims of providing a uniquely authentic platform experience [6].

3. 2022 Papers:

    - "Craving alter real authenticity through the post-postmodern lens" investigates tourists' attitudes toward "alter real authenticity" (altered reality) from a post-postmodern perspective [7].

4. 2021 Papers:

    - "The Essence of Authenticity" expands the "3C-view" of authenticity (consistency, conformity, and connection) by adding a fourth dimension-continuity-creating a "4C-model" that approaches authenticity as a developmental process rather than a static state [8].

ENDNOTES

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