Are Civility and Candor Compatible? Examining the Tension Between Respectful and Honest Workplace Communication

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Are Civility and Candor Compatible? Examining the Tension Between Respectful and Honest Workplace Communication

Kerri C. Nelson, PhD
University of Connecticut, 2019

At the core of recent workplace and public discourse debates appears to be a clear tension between two different but equally important values, the need to be civil and the need to be candid in our day-to-day workplace interactions. However, relatively little is known about how employees resolve this conflict between civility and candor at work and the consequences of this tension for employees and organizations. When employees communicate with colleagues at work, there is often a focus on the content of what is being said. However, an equally important consideration in workplace interactions is how people utilize civility and candor to express their input and how, in turn, others interpret and respond this input (e.g., Bohman & Richardson, 2009). To explore this issue, I conducted two separate studies that address the tension between civility and candor from slightly different perspectives. First, I conducted an experimental vignette study that examined whether people make quick judgments about others’ authenticity, intentions, likeability, and effectiveness based on brief information about how a person utilizes civility and candor, finding that communicators who use both high civility and high candor at work are more likely to be perceived as authentic, well-intentioned, likable, and effective than those using other combinations to get their points across. In a second study, I extended these questions to also consider the role of psychological safety in understanding how pre-existing work relationships may uniquely influence the judgments people make about the tension between civility and candor within their workgroup and to examine if there are also consequences for the emotional labor and loneliness that employees experience. Using latent profile analysis, I
identified five profiles of work communication that varied in levels of psychological safety, civility, and candor, finding that employees belonging to profiles characterized by high levels of all three characteristics had the most positive work experiences. Together, the results of these studies reveal new insights into the inferences people make about the way in which their coworkers balance civility and candor in workplace interactions and the implications of these combinations for important workplace outcomes.
Are Civility and Candor Compatible? Examining the Tension Between Respectful and Honest Workplace Communication

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B.A., Auburn University, 2013
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Kerri C. Nelson
Are Civility and Candor Compatible? Examining the Tension Between Respectful and Honest Workplace Communication

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Back when I was an undergraduate, a Ph.D. student once told me that graduate school was like a marathon interspersed with an obstacle course. I laugh looking back at how accurate that description can be! That being said, reaching the finish line would not have been possible without the guidance and support of a number of individuals. First and foremost, I would like to thank my graduate advisor, Vicki Magley. Her support, guidance, and encouragement over the past five years has helped to shape me into the researcher I am today. I am incredibly grateful for her consistent willingness to give constructive feedback, to engage in brainstorming sessions, and to serve as a key sounding board for research ideas, all of which have been an invaluable part of my dissertation and graduate training.

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Are Civility and Candor Compatible? Examining the Tension Between Respectful and Honest Workplace Communication

“Straightforwardness without civility is like a surgeon’s knife, effective but unpleasant. Candor with courtesy is helpful and admirable.”

- Sri Yukteswar, Hindu guru of Paramahansa Yogananda

Given the recent surge in calls for respect and politeness in both the workplace and public discourse, it is no surprise that “civility” has become the new buzzword for respectful workplace initiatives. Research has demonstrated that employees working in more civil environments tend to be more satisfied, more committed, and less cynical (Leiter, Laschinger, Day, & Gilin-Oore, 2011) and that employees who are perceived as civil are more likely to be sought for advice and to be perceived as leaders (Porath, Gerbasi, & Schorch, 2015). Simply put, civility has been framed as a means to create a “no jerks” workplace culture (Kerfoot, 2008). Unsurprisingly then, civility is often considered to be an important prerequisite for diverse, inclusive, and respectful workplace communication and interactions. Despite these positive connotations, however, it is clear that not everyone feels this way (Cortina, Kabat-Farr, Magley & Nelson, 2017). To some, civility not only has a light side but also a dark side sometimes tainted with ulterior motives. Some groups have questioned whether civility is always truly sincere or authentic in its goals or is at times superficial, primarily intended to silence or censor honest expression and discourage candid feedback (e.g., Calabrese, 2015; Hershcovis, 2012). In other words, civility efforts may not be eliminating “jerks” but rather preventing people from being candid in certain contexts, promoting a non-inclusive environment. Thus, at the core of this debate appears to be a clear tension between two different but perhaps equally important values, the need to be civil and the need to be candid in our day-to-day workplace interactions.
Despite the familiar adages “treat others the way you want to be treated” and “honesty is the best policy,” relatively little is known about how employees resolve this conflict between the need to be civil and the need to be candid at work and the consequences of such tension for organizations, workgroups, and employees. When employees voice opinions, give feedback, communicate, and interact with colleagues at work, there is often a focus on the content of what is being said. However, only examining the content of a message is likely to miss the fact that workplace communication and conflict is relational in nature and, thus, is likely to be shaped by perceptions of those on the receiving end of the communication (Weingart, Behfar, Bendersky, Todorova, & Jehn, 2015). For example, although “communicating honestly creates meaning for communicators, it is not clear that the targets of this communication appreciate it” (Levine, 2016, p. 256). Similarly, although civility is often conveyed through politeness, its benefits may only be reaped if one’s intentions are perceived as genuine by others. Thus, a less recognized but equally important consideration about workplace interactions is not only how coworkers express input and opinions but also how, in turn, others interpret and respond to this input (Ambady et al., 2002; Bohman & Richardson, 2009).

For example, employees may express very similar messages candidly or uncandidly and civilly or uncivilly. However, the way in which others perceive these expressions is likely to influence interpretations of the message and, in turn, the resulting outcomes (e.g., Weingart et al., 2015). As the introductory quotation suggests, employees perceived as being “candid with courtesy” may garner a much different reaction from colleagues than those perceived as being “straightforward without civility.” Thus, whether people effectively integrate civility and candor when communicating with coworkers is open to interpretation, suggesting that those on the receiving end of this balancing act play an important role in determining what happens next.
Therefore, although we are beginning to develop a better understanding of workplace civility, it clear that there may be a need for a more nuanced view of when civility is perceived as functional versus dysfunctional (Cortina et al., 2017; Hershcovis, 2012; Jamieson, Volinsky, Weitz, & Kenski, 2017; Miner et al., 2018) by those on the receiving end of the communication. Similarly, there appears to be a need to develop a better understanding of when honesty (candor) is the best policy and when it is simply seen as selfish or cruel (Levine, 2016). Both factors and how they are combined are likely to be important for the judgments people make about others when they communicate.

So, can civility and candor be compatible? The answer to this question is likely to be complex, moving beyond a simple choice to forsake candor for civility or civility for candor. In this dissertation, I aim to examine what combinations of civility and candor are perceived as the most effective for productive conversation at work from the receiver’s (or observer’s) perspective and whether the inferences people make about these combinations may be affected by the history employees have with their coworkers. In particular, I suggest that both civility and candor are important for productive workplace communication and that it is, in fact, perceptions by the receiver or observer that these two factors have been effectively integrated via appraisals of authenticity and intent that lead to the most positive outcomes whereas perceptions of other combinations may lead to less desirable outcomes. Surprisingly, civility and candor have rarely, if ever, been examined simultaneously, leading to a poor understanding of how these two factors individually and jointly shape reactions to and outcomes of workplace communication between coworkers. Thus, this dissertation aims to explore a number of practical questions centering around the compatibility of civility and candor in workplace communication and interactions. (1) How do employees, as receivers of communication, perceive and experience the tension between
civility and candor in workplace interactions with coworkers? (2) Do these perceptions influence the appraisals employees make about communicators’ intentions and, if so, what are the consequences of these appraisals? (3) What role does psychological safety play in determining perceptions of the most effective balance?

While these research questions are an important starting point for exploring the tension between civility and candor at work, it is important to note that these questions are likely to exist within a larger context and, therefore, may share important connections with a number of related topics. For example, this dissertation may share connections with broader questions related to civility and candor in the context of performance appraisal or dyadic feedback situations, the implications of situations where candor is unwanted, and how civility and candor play out in the context of coworker versus supervisor relationships. Given this potential overlap, it is important to clarify that this dissertation is intended to capture only a slice of this larger picture. For the purposes of the current research, I chose to specifically examine the tension between civility and candor at work within the context of coworker relationships. Further, I also chose to examine perceptions of this tension within the context of the observer’s or receiver’s perspective.

To address these questions, I begin by first reviewing our current understanding of civility and candor and how these two methods of expression may jointly influence perceptions of intent and employee outcomes. I structure this understanding using a combination of theoretical frameworks, including the theory of conflict expression (Weingart et al., 2015), face theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Goffman, 1959), and belongingness theory (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), and lay frameworks, including the Radical Candor approach to feedback (Scott, 2017), that share a common recognition that the way in which communication is expressed at work conveys important information to receivers about how one should interpret and react to
what others are saying. Next, I investigate the relationship between civility and candor across two distinct but related studies. In an initial study, I take a situation-based approach by examining whether people make quick judgments about others’ authenticity, intentions, likeability, and effectiveness based on only brief information about how a person utilizes civility and candor. In a second study, I take a psychological climate approach by extending these questions to consider the role of psychological safety to understand how pre-existing work (i.e., coworker) relationships may uniquely influence the judgments people make about the balancing act of civility and candor within their workgroup and the consequences for the emotional labor and loneliness that employees experience. Together, these studies aid in addressing why we often see such varied responses to civility and candor in the workplace and whether there may be a “best” way to combine civility and candor within workplace interactions to promote more positive outcomes for employees and their coworkers. Thus, this dissertation aims to increase our understanding of the inferences people make about the way in which others’ balance civility and candor in workplace interactions with their coworkers and the implications of these combinations for communicators’ likability and effectiveness and workgroup members’ feelings of belongingness and emotional labor.

**Defining Civility and Candor**

Given the current debates around polite versus honest expression, it is first important to understand what is meant by civility and candor; however, defining civility and candor is likely to be somewhat difficult because it is clear from these debates that perceptions of civility and candor are both fluid and intertwined. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines candor as “unreserved, honest, or sincere expression: forthrightness” and “the free expression of one’s true feelings and opinions” (Candor, n.d.). According to these definitions, one must be
straightforward and avoid “beating around the bush” to be candid. At the same time, this definition also indicates that true candor is simultaneously genuine and sincere, which is likely to depend upon civility. Indeed, civility seems to be most often invoked in situations when individuals are saying something difficult or controversial (Mutz & Reeves, 2005; Porath et al., 2015). The dictionary defines civility as “civilized conduct; especially: courtesy, politeness” and “an act or utterance that is a customary show of good manners” (Civility, n.d.). Similarly, workplace civility is often defined as behavior that demonstrates politeness and respect for others in the research literature (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). According to these definitions, one must demonstrate good manners and a regard for others in order to be civil. However, civility seems to be unlikely when the regard shown is not genuine, which is likely to depend upon candor.

Thus, the question of whether civility without candor is truly civility and whether candor without civility is truly candor reveals a grey area in our understanding of workplace interactions. Whether civility is perceived as good (e.g., encouraging respect) or bad (e.g., superficial) and whether candor is perceived as good (e.g., authentic expression necessary for change) or bad (e.g., bluntness that is selfish or cruel) is likely to depend, in part, on the way the other is expressed or, in other words, how these two methods of expression are combined. For example, candor may be perceived as destructive when not paired with some level of courtesy and respect. Vice versa, civility may be perceived as insincere when not paired with some level of candor or honesty. Understanding these distinctions is important because how employees choose to balance civility and candor is likely to influence important workplace perceptions and outcomes. This grey area presents a unique challenge beyond the typical discussion that frames civility as always good and incivility as always bad (Calabrese, 2015; Cortina et al., 2017; Hershcovis, 2012; Jamieson et al., 2017; Miner et al., 2018; White, 2006) to determine when and
why specific combinations of civility and candor are functional or dysfunctional.

**The Civility/Candor Tradeoff**

Although civility and candor clearly appear to be intertwined, there is currently a lack of coherent or unified theory outlining the relationship between civility and candor. One potential reason for this lack of coherent theory may be that common conceptualizations of politeness in social interactions have traditionally framed politeness and honesty as incompatible, posing civility and candor as tradeoffs that help communicators maintain “face.” According to face theory, people are motivated not only to protect how others perceive them in social interactions but are also obligated, via expectations of politeness, to protect others’ face by ensuring that they do not embarrass their conversation partners (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Goffman, 1959). When people fail to uphold this obligation by engaging in face-threatening (i.e., uncivil) acts, they demonstrate a disregard for their partner’s feelings and threaten their partner’s desire to maintain a positive image (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Notably, this concept of “saving face” has played an important role in shaping scholarly conceptualizations of incivility and civility (e.g., Andersson & Pearson, 1999). For example, Gill and Sypher (2009) have emphasized that “civility demands that one speaks in ways that are respectful, responsible, restrained, and principled, and avoid that which is offensive, rude, demeaning, and threatening” (Gill & Sypher, 2009, p. 55). Similarly, Lane and McCourt (2013) have indicated that behaviors like conscious verbal editing are necessary for civility to prevail. Thus, similar to face theory, scholarly discussion around civility continues to reinforce the idea that to be civil one must show “restraint” and be non-threatening when communicating, requirements that run counter to the “unreserved” and “free expression” necessary of candor (Candor, n.d.). Consequently, rudeness and incivility have at times become synonymous with
candid and honest expression in everyday language, such that to be civil is good and to be candid is bad. However, presenting civility and candor as a dichotomy currently limits our understanding of how civility and candor interact outside of this all or nothing approach.

**Combining Civility and Candor**

Recently, both lay and scholarly discussions have begun to move beyond this good-bad dichotomy to reveal instances where civility may have a “dark side” and candor a “light side.” For example, mistreatment scholars have begun questioning whether, at times, there is so much pressure to be civil and kind that civility inadvertently stifles the discussion of problems that require honest feedback to be solved (Hershcovis, 2012). Scholars in the humanities have also questioned whether civility can sometimes be dysfunctional when it is used as a guise by the powerful to silence the candor or opinions of others (Calabrese, 2015). Similarly, in regard to candor, a newly found appreciation for the value of honest feedback in the workplace and in public discourse may explain the growing popularity of a recent layperson approach to feedback called Radical Candor in the business world.

Given these emerging discussions, a more useful method for thinking about the relationship between civility and candor may involve placing them in a two-dimensional as opposed to one-dimensional space, such that civility and candor have the potential to be both complementary and incompatible. However, as outlined above, the mistreatment literature has had the tendency to frame candor (i.e., sometimes labeled incivility) as bad and civility as good, making it difficult to understand the relationship between respectful and honest communication from (in)civility theory alone. Thus, it is important to draw from related disciplines to begin building a deeper understanding of this relationship. One related discipline that may prove useful is work on interpersonal conflict, which tends to take a more balanced approach toward
determining when communication is constructive and when it is detrimental (Raver & Barling, 2008). Thus, alternative approaches might help to inform why the intentions behind civility and candor are so often disputed. Based on this need, two recent frameworks may serve as useful starting points for developing an understanding of the relationship between civility and candor from this view: the theory of conflict expression and the Radical Candor approach to feedback.

One theoretical framework that may help to conceptualize civility and candor within a two-dimensional space is the theory of conflict expression (Weingart et al., 2015), which has recently emerged within the organizational conflict literature. Although this dissertation does not focus explicitly on conflict per se, rather focusing more broadly on how employees generally communicate and give feedback to one another via civility and candor, this theory provides an interesting framework with which to understand the civility and candor debate. According to the theory of conflict expression, “the manner in which conflict is expressed will influence perceptions and reactions, changing the way the conflict process unfolds, the impact it has on the parties involved, and subsequent outcomes” (Weingart et al., 2015, p. 235). In other words, this theory poses that the actual substance of what we communicate about may sometimes be less important than how we do so because the way in which we communicate provides important information about intentions and key relational cues about how to react (Weingart et al., 2015). At the center of the theory are the concepts of directness and intensity, the idea that conflict can be expressed more or less directly and more or less intensely and that these two factors are tied to receivers’ perceptions and inferences about the conflict. In this theory, directness refers to the extent to which one communicates his or her position explicitly rather than implicitly, and oppositional intensity refers to how forcefully that position is conveyed (Weingart et al., 2015). Notably, the theory posits that a high directness, low intensity communication strategy will lead
to more positive reactions than other combinations. Although the question of whether civility and
candor directly map onto Weingart et al.’s (2015) directness and oppositional intensity
framework is unclear, this theory’s focus on the way conflict is expressed provides a useful
starting point for thinking about why various combinations of civility and candor may be
perceived differently.

Secondly, one layperson framework that may help to conceptualize civility and candor
within a two-dimensional space is the Radical Candor approach to giving feedback, which has
been gaining increasing popularity in the business world due to its premise that successful
workplace communication occurs when employees simultaneously show that they care while
also speaking their mind (Scott, 2017). Notably, although this dissertation idea was developed
without prior knowledge of Radical Candor, the Radical Candor framework aligns fairly well
with a discussion of civility and candor and, thus, may be useful to consider in this context.
However, it must first be acknowledged that despite Radical Candor’s growing popularity and
intuitive appeal, empirical evidence for this approach is currently lacking. Similar to the theory
of conflict expression, Radical Candor uses a two-dimensional approach to communicating
feedback. In this framework, two dimensions called “challenge directly” and “care personally”
are crossed to explain four feedback techniques: ruinous empathy (i.e., high caring, low
directness), manipulative insincerity (i.e., low caring, low directness), obnoxious aggression (i.e.,
low caring, high directness), and radical candor (i.e., high caring, high directness). Of the four
quadrants, Scott (2017) posits that radical candor is the most productive way to provide feedback
because it helps to build relationships and leads to higher-quality work whereas the other three
quadrants depict pitfall behaviors that can make feedback less than successful.

Appraising Civility and Candor
Despite their differing terminology, what both of these approaches share is a common focus that suggests that the way in which employees communicate and provide input to others at work is central to determining the reactions and outcomes that result from it. In other words, appraisals play a central role in both of these approaches regardless of whether their role is implied or explicit. In the theory of conflict expression, appraisals, or what Weingart and colleagues (2015) refer to as “reactions,” serve as the central mechanisms determining how situations unfold, such that the level of directness and intensity conveyed by communicators provides essential information to others about the communicators’ standpoints. Reactions in this framework are defined broadly to encompass both substantive and relational information, suggesting that even brief interactions provide a wealth of knowledge about others (Weingart et al., 2015). Notably, conflict expression theory makes a clear prediction that expressions characterized by low directness, which may be comparable to low candor in the current study, are likely to be viewed as having ambiguous intentions, such that appraisals of communication that utilizes low candor are likely to be varied. However, what is less clear is conflict expression theory’s ability to predict how individuals will appraise communication varying in levels of civility given that the concept of oppositional intensity is likely to conflict with the operationalization of both civility and incivility as low intensity phenomena (e.g., Cortina et al., 2017).

In contrast to the explicit inclusion of appraisals in the theory of conflict expression, the importance of appraisals is implied by the Radical Candor approach through the usage of terms like “sincerity” and “insincerity” to describe reactions to feedback strategies that are high or low on the caring personally dimension, respectively. However, the Radical Candor approach appears to favor feedback strategies that are high in directness. For example, Scott (2017) asserts that
being perceived as obnoxiously aggressive (i.e., what might be akin to high candor, low civility) is the second-best approach to providing feedback if radical candor is not possible and that ruinous empathy (e.g., low candor, high civility) and manipulative insincerity (e.g., low candor, low civility) are the worst strategies: “Most people prefer the challenging ‘jerk’ to [those whose] ‘niceness’ gets in the way of candor” (p. 25). Thus, although appraisals are central to both approaches, they make slightly different predictions about what reactions each combination of civility and candor might receive.

Therefore, key mechanisms in the current research are the appraisals people make about others via the way they have integrated civility and candor. In particular, this dissertation focuses on how people appraise others’ authenticity and others’ good intentions when integrating civility and candor because authenticity signals that communicators are credible and genuine and good intentions signal that communicators do not mean harm (e.g., Miner et al., 2018; Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008), leading to more positive outcomes. Notably, those who have raised concerns about a potential “dark side” side to civility have particularly questioned the authenticity and intentions behind civility efforts, but there is currently a lack of empirical work in this regard. Thus, research combining civility and candor may be particularly appropriate for providing more clarity around why civility and candor have resulted in such mixed and varying reactions and outcomes for employees, workgroups, and organizations.

Despite the somewhat exploratory nature of this research, what is clear is that the impact of civility and candor appears to center around perceived motives. As I suggest at the start of this dissertation and consistent with the two approaches outlined above, studying civility and candor in isolation is likely to miss the impact that each factor has on the way in which the other is received. Further, if civility and candor are in the eye of the beholder, people’s intentions may
easily become unambiguous through the inferences we make about their behavior when they attempt to integrate civility and candor. In other words, appearances are central to respect (Buss, 1999), and whether others appear to come from a place of goodwill and agreeableness is likely to shape reactions. Thus, the following studies aim to begin establishing insights into the relationship between civility and candor, how receivers of such communication perceive civility and candor when they are combined in different ways, and the workplace outcomes that result from these perceptions.

**Study 1**

The purpose of this initial study is to introduce civility and candor in a two-dimensional space, to provide an initial look into whether these combinations of civility and candor are distinguishable, and to understand whether people make quick judgments about communicators’ intentions when they use these different combinations. However, to begin building civility and candor within a two-dimensional space and to gain a better understanding of how civility and candor influence appraisals of authenticity and intentions, further consideration of civility and candor first separately and then jointly is required.

**Civility**

Although the topic of civility has been receiving quite a bit of attention lately, there is actually very little current research on workplace civility from which to draw upon when determining how people may react and respond to it. In fact, much of what we know about workplace civility has been informed by our knowledge of empirical work on workplace incivility (Porath, 2011). Thus, I also draw from the workplace incivility literature to begin building our understanding of how people may react and respond to different combinations of civility and candor.
In the workplace mistreatment literature, incivility has been conceptualized as low intensity, high ambiguity rude behavior that runs contrary to norms for respect (Andersson & Pearson, 1999); it is described as a highly ambiguous form of mistreatment because it can be unclear whether the rude behavior was intentional or simply oversight on the part of the communicator (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Recently, Cortina et al. (2017) built upon this conceptualization by similarly attributing the same low intensity, high ambiguity dimensions to workplace civility, while also distinguishing incivility as performance degrading and civility as neutral to performance enhancing. Despite the centrality of ambiguous intent in these conceptualizations, mistreatment scholars have observed that intent is rarely, if ever, measured in studies of workplace incivility or civility (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Miner et al., 2018; Raver & Barling, 2008). Yet, given this ambiguity, it seems logical that how receivers interpret these behaviors is perceptual and relational in nature and may explain why the line between civility and incivility may appear blurry at times. For example, incivility or civility may very well become unambiguous if one perceives that others are being insincere versus genuine or that there is harmful versus constructive intent. In other words, “from a [receiver]’s perspective, perceived intent may be all that matters because [receivers] will react based on their perception, whether or not their perception is accurate” (Hershcovis, 2011, p. 503).

This possibility is supported by previous research that suggests people do in fact make very quick judgments about intentions when others communicate (Ambady et al., 2002; Ambady & Rosenthal, 1993) and that workplace climate and norms shape how behavior is enacted and viewed (e.g., Pearson, Andersson, & Porath, 2000; Walsh et al., 2012). For example, research on incivility shows that directly or indirectly retaliating against a perpetrator is one way in which employees may react to experienced or observed incivility (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Porath
suggesting that people are likely to make judgment calls about the appropriateness of others’ behavior and respond accordingly. Similarly, research on workplace civility suggests that those who are perceived as civil are more likely to be viewed as both warm and competent (Porath et al., 2015), also suggesting that people tend to make inferences about others’ good intent. Although there are a variety of ways that targets can react to civility and incivility, the cognitive and emotional reactions described by this previous research provide examples that demonstrate how individuals will make judgments about whether a given behavior was (in)authentic or intended to harm and that this will influence outcomes. Thus, based on this previous research, it appears that high levels of civility may be linked to beliefs that others are communicating authentically and with good intentions whereas low levels of civility may be associated with beliefs that others are communicating insincerely and with harmful intentions (e.g., “destructively”: Gill & Sypher, 2009). However, as mentioned previously, high civility may also be perceived as superficial when it silences candor (e.g., Calabrese, 2015; Hershcovis, 2012), indicating that high civility may not always be perceived as authentic and well-intentioned.

**Candor**

Although there is lack of research that specifically examines the impact of candor in the workplace, insight can be garnered from research on similar topics like open communication and deception that suggests that appraisals of candor are likely to be a mixed bag. In particular, candor’s benefits appear to be ambiguous because open, honest communication has the potential to be both hurtful and helpful (Chun & Choi, 2014; Jehn, 1995). For example, one study found that people who tell prosocial lies are rated more positively than those who are honest when others perceived that the lie was intended to benefit others; in contrast, low honesty was related
to negative impressions of the liar when it was perceived that lying was neither helpful nor harmful (Levine & Schweitzer, 2014). Similarly, another study on honest, but potentially hurtful messages found that the impact of such messages is likely to be dependent, in part, on the appraisals people make about others’ motives when the messages are delivered (Zhang & Stafford, 2009). In particular, honest messages perceived as harmful were more likely to be related to negative relationship consequences and honest messages perceived as helpful were more likely to be related to positive relationship outcomes (Zhang & Stafford, 2009). Further, a study examining team strategies for managing conflict found that both successful and unsuccessful teams reported utilizing open communication strategies for different types of conflict (Behfar, Peterson, Mannix, & Trochim, 2008); affective tone influenced the success of this strategy, such that teams with higher satisfaction levels were more likely to communicate amicably and nonemotionally (Behfar et al., 2008), suggesting the role that civility has to play. Based on this previous research, it appears that that both low and high candor receive mixed responses depending on the situation and, thus, the impact of candor on appraisals of authenticity and intent is less clear.

**How the Tension Between Civility and Candor Shapes Appraisals and Outcomes**

Importantly, researchers suggest that the appropriateness of one’s communication may be best judged from receivers’ perspectives (Gross & Guerrero, 2000), and that people make these judgments very quickly. To some extent then, there appears to be a tradeoff between being 100% candid and 100% civil if one wants to be perceived as genuine and well-intentioned. Understanding how people form these perceptions of sincerity and intent is important because different people can appraise the same behavior positively or negatively and these judgments shape the meaning people attach to others’ behavior (Marchiondo, Cortina, & Kabat-Farr, 2018;
Vangelisti & Young, 2000). Being 100% civil may mean diluting a message, leading to perceptions that one is masking the truth and being inauthentic. Similarly, being 100% candid may mean being harsh or blunt, leading to perceptions that one is mean-spirited. In other words, just because one prefers to communicate in a certain way does not mean others will respond positively. Although these examples depict extreme ends of possible ways in which to resolve the tension between civility and candor, they depict the choices individuals and workgroups make when they communicate and the potential consequences for perceptions of sincerity and intent. Yet, it is not difficult to think that there is a of a number of possible ways that civility and candor can be combined at and between these extremes.

High candor and low civility. One approach to this workplace balancing act involves mixing high candor with low civility, what the Radical Candor approach calls obnoxious aggression. Typically, this combination is fairly controversial because some people value blunt expression whereas others perceive it as just plain mean. For example, many people associate this combination with justifications such as, “I was just being honest!” or “They needed a wake-up call!” Although the communicators themselves may feel that they are being authentic in saying what they truly mean, candid expression can be and often is seen a rude or blunt regardless of the communicator’s intentions. In fact, candor in these situations might be mistaken for—or even become—incivility (Hershcovis, 2012) when such language comes across as evaluative and critical (Gibb, 1961). Previous research supports this possibility, suggesting that conflict tends to be related to detriments in group satisfaction and performance when the conflict becomes personal and hostile (Jehn, 1997). Further, research also demonstrates that destructive criticism, which is criticism that is conveyed in an insensitive manner, is related to negative reactions such as anger, beliefs that the feedback giver had harmful intentions, and perceptions
that the feedback giver is less trustworthy (Raver, Jensen, Lee, & O’Reilly, 2012). In particular, “because recipients of destructive criticism see themselves as victims of a personal attack, they may label the experience as bullying, harassment, or other forms of victimisation, even if the feedback-giver is merely an insensitive communicator” (Raver et al., 2012, p. 197).

Because candid expression is typically unreserved and frank (Candor, n.d.), too much candor with too little civility may border on harshness or cruelty if others are not accepting of this method of expression. In other words, if the directness of candid expression is paired with low civility, the communication may take on a high level of intensity, which can reduce people’s capacity to process information (De Dreu, 2006; Walton, 1969). Such a combination might signal strong hostility from the communicator, even if unintended, and evoke a defensive reaction (Weingart et al., 2015), such that high candor, low civility is not likely to be well-received:

When we are trying so hard to be honest that we prioritise awareness over kindness, on a very practical level we may find that others are unable to hear what we have to say…the problematic behaviours which we want to highlight, may well be so hard for others to own up to that they just respond defensively and shut down. This may particularly be the case if we communicate with them in an accusing or insistent way which doesn’t include listening to their perspective at all (Barker, 2011, para. 6).

Thus, even if a communicator’s intent may be to bring about change, prioritizing candor over civility may lead to perceptions that he or she is being mean or cruel-intentioned and insincere in the process, which makes it difficult for recipients to actually hear the candid message (Raver et al., 2012).

**Low candor and high civility.** Another approach to this balancing act is to mix high
civility with low candor, what Radical Candor calls ruinous empathy. As outlined in the civility
debate discussed earlier in this dissertation, perceptions and reactions to this integration approach
are currently ill-defined because high civility can be seen, more positively, as a means to
eliminate jerks (Kerfoot, 2008) and, less positively, as a way to silence the voices of others or to
mask honest feedback (e.g., Calabrese, 2015; Hershcovis, 2012). On the more positive side,
previous research suggests that combining high civility with low candor can lead to positive
perceptions. For example, one study found that groups that avoided talking about relationship
conflict were more satisfied than those who talked about such issues openly (Jehn, 1995).
Further, research suggests that low candor can also be perceived as moral. A study on prosocial
lies found that when others perceived that a lie was initiated to help someone (i.e., indicating
benevolence), the communicator was perceived as more moral than when the communicator told
the truth (Levine & Schweitzer, 2014). Although low candor is not necessarily synonymous with
lying, this research suggests that being kind can be key and that honesty may not always be the
best policy at work. Interestingly, these researchers indicated that prioritizing kindness over
honesty can be beneficial because being honest may be more important for establishing personal
meaning whereas being kind may be more important for building trusting relationships (Levine,
2016). Echoing this conclusion, Lane and McCourt (2013) posited that restraint demonstrated via
situational awareness and verbal editing are, in fact, “key component[s] of civility” (p. 21). This
suggests that high civility paired with low candor may lead to perceptions that the communicator
is well-intentioned because their method of communicating signals an awareness of others, in
turn, resulting in more positive outcomes at work.

On the other hand, too much civility without candor might also lead to surface-level
social harmony or “cordial hypocrisy” that is perceived as phony or insincere (e.g., Miner et al.,
2018; Solomon & Flores, 2003), similar to Radical Candor’s conceptualization of “ruinous empathy” whereby communicators show that they care but fail to speak their minds (Scott, 2017). In fact, the verbal editing and restraint that Lane and McCourt (2013) characterize as components of civility are often perceived as forms of self-censorship by others. Without honesty or candor, civility may be perceived as superficial, such that workers have to walk on eggshells or tip toe around as to not hurt others’ feelings (e.g., Tobak, 2011). Further, perceptions that others are being disingenuous is related to fewer positive emotions and less rapport among individuals (Hennig-Thurau, Groth, Paul, & Gremier, 2006). If civility is so heavily prioritized such that it distorts the message, low candor may mean that there will continue to be a lack of action or change for the better (Hershcovis, 2012). Additionally, high civility paired with low candor may also be seen as a combination that allows others to easily assign an “uncivil” label to those with whom we disagree (Calabrese, 2015). In other words, too much civility also has the potential to muddy the waters of straightforward conversation, which can lead to avoidance and information neglect (De Dreu, 2006; Walton, 1969). Thus, high civility without candor may simply serve as the pretense of respect, masking deeper issues like cynicism and distrust:

When we are trying so hard to be kind that we prioritise compassion over honesty, we may find ourselves ignoring or avoiding tensions which are there in order that everybody gets along…If our aim is to increase [kindness], we may find ourselves doing the exact opposite as people feel even more hurt and raw and less inclined to engage with one another, or we ourselves behave passively-aggressively because we are suppressing any difficult feelings (Barker, 2011, para. 5).
Thus, as this quote and previous research suggests, the inferences people make when others utilize a combination of high civility and low candor appear to depend on how the civility is interpreted, leaving the outcomes of this combination currently ill-defined.

**Low candor and low civility.** A third approach to resolving the tension between civility and candor is to mix low candor with low civility, what Radical Candor calls manipulative insincerity. Notably, this particular combination may be the one that most closely reflects current conceptualizations of incivility because it is most similar to passive-aggressive behavior, which is typically rude and indirect (Gelfand, Leslie, & Keller, 2008; Weingart et al., 2015). Importantly, an expression cannot be considered direct when it is expressed to a third party (Weingart et al., 2015), meaning that behaviors like talking behind someone’s back would be considered low candor as opposed to high candor.

Passive-aggressive expression would also be considered to be low in civility because it fails to demonstrate respect and regard for others (e.g., Andersson & Pearson, 1999). For example, incivility is consistently associated with negative outcomes such as reduced job satisfaction, reduced coworker and supervisor satisfaction, and increased psychological distress (e.g., Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001; Lim, Cortina, & Magley, 2008). When a combination of low candor and low civility is utilized, issues are not discussed out in the open and, instead, giving the silent treatment, making jokes at others’ expense, or putting others down become the norm (e.g., Cortina et al., 2001). In layman’s terms, passive-aggressive expression typically implies that the communicator has hostile intentions and is being insincere. However, current operationalizations of incivility within the mistreatment literature specify that the intention behind such behavior is ambiguous and low intensity (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Cortina et al., 2001). Yet, it is unclear if targets of such expression see it as low intensity
Therefore, the inferences people make about those who utilize a low candor, low civility approach are somewhat ill-defined, although the Radical Candor approach might suggest that this combination may lean more towards perceptions that there is hostile intent.

**High candor and high civility.** A fourth approach to resolving the tension between civility and candor is to mix high candor with high civility, which would be akin to the namesake category of Radical Candor. This combination may be the combination that has the most positive potential but also may be the most difficult to achieve. This is because while candor with civility conveys appreciation and regard for others, it still allows for direct, honest, clear, and transparent expression that can sometimes be difficult for people to hear. There can be a certain kindness to being candid, especially when it is done in a respectful way. For example, research suggests that those who are seen as civil are more likely to be perceived as warm and competent and, in turn, more likely to be sought for work advice (Porath et al., 2015). If civil employees are more likely to be sought for work advice, it may be the case that these individuals are particularly good at giving candid advice in a warm and respectful manner. Research on constructive criticism would support this conclusion, demonstrating that constructive criticism, defined as negative feedback conveyed with a considerate tone and that is non-threatening, is more likely to lead to better performance and less likely to lead to relational harm than destructive criticism because it frames the situation as an opportunity to improve rather than a personal attack (Gibb, 1961; Raver et al., 2012; Weingart et al., 2015). Therefore, candor that points out problems or others’ flaws will likely be best received if it is done in a civil way.

By giving room for others to respond (e.g., Weingart et al., 2015), civility may temper the harshness of candid expression, shifting perceptions such that candor is seen as authentic and well-intentioned. In other words, it is possible that candor loses its negative edge or loses some
of its bite when paired with respect and courtesy, making it an effective combination. However, a lack of candor can sometimes be seen as a tactful response in the workplace, such that this distinction is complex. Thus, a combination of high civility and high candor might best convey consideration for others by signaling tact, which “involves keeping the elements of a conversation in a harmonious balance and judging correctly and in what manner to be pleasant, truthful, and humorous” (Laverty, 2009, p. 235). In this way, a combination of high civility and high candor is likely to be perceived as the most sincere and well-meaning method of expression compared to the other approaches because it allows for respectful, yet direct discussion of issues in a way that reduces the need to “read between the lines” such that the focus can remain on the content of the message. As these different approaches to the balancing act convey, both civility and candor serve expressive functions that communicate important relational information to others, such as inferences about authenticity and intent. Thus, I hypothesize:

**Hypothesis 1:** A person who is perceived to be both civil and candid, compared to other combinations, is more likely to be perceived as (a) authentic and (b) well-intentioned.

Further, because communication is a two-way street, this relational information is likely to be important for determining outcomes for communicators. For example, perceptions that the communicator has been both authentic and well-intentioned in his or her expression is likely to prompt positive outcomes for the communicator, such that they are seen as more likable and more effective in their communication. Previous research suggests that people do in fact make judgments about others’ use of civility and candor. For example, Porath and Erez (2007) found that brief, one-time instances of rudeness were enough to reduce participants’ performance, their helpfulness toward others, and their cognitive functioning; these findings held regardless of whether the rudeness was directed at the participants, another party, or imagined. Another study
demonstrated similar results finding that brief rude e-mails as opposed to supportive e-mails increased people’s negative moods, decreased their emotional and social energy, and harmed their task performance (Giumetti et al., 2013). In contrast, Gabriel, Acosta, and Grandey (2015) found that positive emotional displays, which signal cooperation and helpfulness, are particularly important for employees’ performance evaluations when customer service employees typically have one-time interactions with customers. These findings suggest that communication combinations that utilize high civility rather than low civility (i.e., high civility/low candor and high civility/high candor) are likely to be preferred and receive better responses from others in brief interactions because they do not encourage the listener to become defensive (e.g., Gibb, 1961). Thus, civil communication is likely to boost perceptions of sincerity and good intentions in brief interactions, and, in turn, positively influence judgments about a communicator’s likability. Because trust plays an important role in genuine liking (McAllister, 1995), perceptions that a communicator is being authentic and well-intentioned in his or her communication is likely to go a long way towards building positive relationships.

Research on prosocial lies also provides insight into how people may make judgments about others’ likability via civility and candor. For example, one study found that those who lie or tell the truth with altruistic intentions are perceived as significantly more moral after a single encounter than those who do so with selfish intentions (Levine & Schweitzer, 2014). Further, dishonesty in brief interactions may increase trust more so than honesty when the lie is perceived to be altruistic rather than self-serving (Levine & Schweitzer, 2015). Importantly, people also tend to perceive dishonesty as the most appropriate response when being honest could cause unnecessary harm (Levine, 2016). Previous research supports this conclusion given that perceptions that an honest message is intentionally hurtful are related to more negative relational
consequences whereas perceptions that an honest message is intended to enhance or help are related to more positive relational outcomes (Zhang & Stafford, 2009). Together, these findings suggest that communicators whose high candor is initially perceived as selfish and insincere may be perceived as less likable because they do not have others’ best interests at heart. However, if high candor is paired with high civility, candor’s “honest message” may be perceived as more genuine and helpful as opposed to harmful (e.g., Zhang & Stafford, 2009), which may lead to greater feelings of liking towards the communicator because the communication indicates caring. Thus, I hypothesize:

*Hypothesis 2:* A person who is perceived to be both civil and candid, compared to other combinations, will be seen as more likable.

*Hypothesis 3:* (a) Appraisals of authenticity and (b) intent will mediate the relationship between candor and civility combinations and the communicator’s likability.

Yet, just because communicators are seen as likable does not mean that they are also perceived as effective in addressing problems or bringing about change, which is often an important goal of speaking up in the first place. For example, a highly civil but low candor communicator may be very likable because he or she is always polite and respectful of others. However, he or she may simultaneously be viewed as very ineffective when it comes to addressing issues, such as a poor-performing coworker, because the issues are either never mentioned or are masked by indirect expression in an effort to save face. According to the theory of conflict expression, direct expression like candor helps to provide unambiguous information about communicators’ standpoints (Weingart et al., 2015). People often use candor to get a point across, express opinions, or to drive home a problem. Thus, clear and candid expression is typically necessary for a given issue to be recognized and acted upon and, as such, is essential
for perceptions that communication will effectively bring around a desired change. Notably though, the value placed on candor seems to depend on whether the candor is first perceived as altruistic or supportive (e.g., Gibb, 1961; Levine & Schweitzer, 2014), which is likely to depend on how respectfully the communicator conveys the candor by pairing it with civil expression.

As mentioned previously, when people have very little pre-existing information about a communicator, positive emotional displays go a long way in signaling that one is willing to cooperate and be helpful (Gabriel, Acosta, & Grandey, 2015). In contrast, perceptions that a communicator has acted in a way that was intentionally harmful is related to feelings of anger (Weiner, Amirkhan, Folkes, & Verette, 1987). For example, research shows that when critical feedback about employees’ performance is negatively attributed to the feedback giver’s disposition, employees are less receptive to the content of the criticism and less willing to accept its relevance (Leung, Su, & Morris, 2001). Further, people are less likely to hear the intended message when it seems like the communicator’s goal is simply to bully or assert control (Gibb, 1961). Thus, how respectfully candor is conveyed is likely to determine whether such straightforward expression accomplishes its intended goal. In other words, although direct, candid expression can provide clarity that leads to action, when done in a rude way its effectiveness is likely to decrease as a result of appraisals that the communicator has selfish intentions as opposed to having the recipients’ best interests at heart. Consequently, integrating high civility with high candor appears to be the most effective way to respectfully address problems and issues out in the open because it may simultaneously be seen as authentic (i.e., the communicator genuinely says what he or she means) and well-intentioned (i.e., the communicator’s goal is to help others or bring about positive change). Therefore, I hypothesize:

_Hypothesis 4:_ A person who is perceived to be both civil and candid, compared to other
combinations, will be seen as a more effective communicator.

_Hypothesis 5:_ (a) Appraisals of authenticity and (b) intent will mediate the relationship between candor and civility combinations and the communicator’s effectiveness.

Importantly, the theory of conflict expression and Radical Candor appear to make the explicit prediction that a high civility, high candor approach will be perceived as the most sincere and well-intentioned form of communication and will result in the most positive outcomes, as indicated by the hypotheses above. However, the predictions that these frameworks make for the other three quadrants are somewhat less clear outside of the assumption that they result in poorer outcomes. Thus, specific hypotheses are made for the high civility, high candor approach whereas predictions for the other three quadrants remain exploratory. A conceptual model for this study is presented in Figure 1.

Method

**Participants.** Participants were 218 undergraduate students (71.1% female, 59.7% White, \(M_{\text{age}} = 19.7, SD_{\text{age}} = 1.62\)) enrolled in psychology courses at a university in the northeastern United States. Participants were recruited from a subject pool and received course credit for their participation. Of the sample, 57.8% held a job at the time of participation.

**Procedure.** Participants were asked to take place in a study about workplace interactions and communication. All participants read two hypothetical scenarios in which they were asked to imagine themselves as an observer of the described interactions between work colleagues, Michael (or Michelle) and Andrew. I developed the vignettes based on situations described by Sandy Hershcovis (2012) that demonstrate a potential dark side of workplace civility. These particular scenarios were chosen because they help to frame possible ways in which different combinations of civility and candor can play out in the workplace and why certain combinations
may be favored over others. Scenario 1 involved Michael/Michelle reacting to an inefficient meeting led by Andrew and Scenario 2 involved Michael/Michelle reacting to a poor-performing coworker (Andrew). Each scenario fully crossed civility and candor (i.e., candor: low/high; civility: low/high), such that there were four different vignettes for each scenario (see Appendix A).

Upon beginning the study, participants were randomly assigned a vignette from one of the scenarios: high candor/high civility ($n = 52$), high candor/low civility ($n = 53$), low candor/high civility ($n = 54$), or low candor/low civility ($n = 52$). Because previous research suggests that women, who are often expected to behave more communally, may be evaluated more negatively than men for displaying similarly assertive behavior (Williams & Tiedens, 2016), approximately half of the participants in each condition read about Michael and Andrew whereas the other half read about Michelle and Andrew to account for any potential effects due to communicator gender\(^1\). After reading the vignette, participants were asked to respond to a questionnaire about their perceptions and reactions to the interaction. After completing the questionnaire, participants repeated this process with a matching vignette from the other scenario. For example, if the participant saw the high candor/high civility (Michael) vignette from Scenario 1, the participant then saw the high candor/high civility (Michael) vignette from Scenario 2. The scenarios were counterbalanced.

Measures. To my knowledge, there are currently no adequate pre-existing measures that assess candor, appraisals of sincerity, or appraisals of intent, so I developed these measures

\(^1\) Given the perceptual nature of the relationships explored in this study, there is a real possibility that the civility and candor combinations may be appraised somewhat differently depending on whether they are used by a male or female communicator. Adding further complication is the question of whether the gender of the coworker on the receiving end or the gender of the rater might also play a role. However, due to the exploratory nature of this study, I did not examine the role of gender beyond the communicator so as not to overcomplicate the study design.
specifically for this study using knowledge from previous research. All items were rated on a scale of 1 (‘strongly disagree’) to 7 (‘strongly agree’) unless otherwise indicated. Further, all items for Study 1 are listed in Appendix B.

*Civility* was measured using six items developed by Porath et al. (2015) based on previous research and civility conceptualizations. Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that Michael/Michelle “treated Andrew with respect,” “treated Andrew with dignity,” “treated Andrew politely,” “was pleasant to Andrew,” “treated Andrew in a caring manner,” and “was considerate” ($\alpha_{\text{Scenario1}} = .97$; $\alpha_{\text{Scenario2}} = .95$).

*Candor* was measured using nine items: five self-developed items based on dictionary definitions of candor and Weingart et al.’s (2015) conceptualization of directness in conflict expression and four conceptually-related items borrowed from published articles. Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that Michael/Michelle “was straightforward in his/her communication with Andrew,” “was honest with Andrew,” “was candid about his/her viewpoints or feelings with Andrew,” “was frank with Andrew,” “communicated openly to Andrew,” “said exactly what he/she meant to Andrew” (Walumbwa et al., 2008), “expressed his/her views directly to Andrew” (Chen & Tjosvold, 2002), “was open about expressing his/her thoughts and ideas to Andrew,” and “expressed his/her opinions candidly to Andrew” (Chun & Choi, 2014) when communicating ($\alpha_{\text{Scenario1}} = .99$; $\alpha_{\text{Scenario2}} = .99$).

*Appraisals of authenticity* were measured using four descriptive items based on Miner et al.’s (2018) discussion about the ways in which incivility and civility may be interpreted. Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed that Michael/Michelle’s comments and/or actions were “authentic,” “genuine,” “sincere,” and “phony” ($\alpha_{\text{Scenario1}} = .88$; $\alpha_{\text{Scenario2}} = .89$).
Appraisals of intentions were measured using seven descriptive items based on previous research that suggests that perceptions of intent tend revolve around whether the behavior was seem as harmful or hostile (Hershcovis, 2011; Marchiondo et al., 2018; Miner et al., 2018). Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed that Michael/Michelle’s intentions were “constructive,” “helpful,” “well-meaning,” “self-centered,” “manipulative,” “harmful,” and “hostile” (α_{Scenario1} = .86; α_{Scenario2} = .84).

Liking was measured using four items adapted from Wayne and Ferris (1990): “I like Michael/Michelle,” “I would get along with Michael/Michelle,” “It would be a pleasure to work with Michael/Michelle,” and “I think Michael/Michelle would make a good coworker” (α_{Scenario1} = .95; α_{Scenario2} = .95).

Communication effectiveness was measured using two items: one self-developed item, “Michael/Michelle’s comments and/or actions would be effective in changing Andrew’s behavior,” and one item developed by Whiting, Maynes, Podsakoff, and Podsakoff (2012), “Michael/Michelle’s comments and/or actions are likely to enhance the performance of the team” (α_{Scenario1} = .88; α_{Scenario2} = .87).

Demographics questionnaire. Participants were asked to report their gender, race, age, and whether they held a job at the time of participation.

Results and Discussion

All analyses were conducted twice, once for Scenario 1 and once for Scenario 2. Before testing my hypotheses, I conducted manipulation checks. A series of one-way analyses of variance confirmed that the civility and candor manipulations were perceived as intended. In Scenario 1, participants perceived the communicator to be more civil in the two high civility conditions (M_{High Candor/High Civility} = 5.56, SD_{High Candor/High Civility} = 1.12; M_{Low Candor/High Civility} = 4.82,
SD_{Low Candor/High Civility} = 1.04) than in the two low civility conditions (M_{High Candor/Low Civility} = 2.31, SD_{High Candor/Low Civility} = 1.10; M_{Low Candor/Low Civility} = 3.20, SD_{Low Candor/Low Civility} = 1.25), F(3, 204) = 89.68, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .57. Participants also perceived the communicator to be more candid in the two high candor conditions (M_{High Candor/High Civility} = 5.77, SD_{High Candor/High Civility} = 1.08; M_{High Candor/Low Civility} = 4.99, SD_{High Candor/Low Civility} = 1.15) than in the two low candor conditions (M_{Low Candor/High Civility} = 2.02, SD_{Low Candor/High Civility} = 1.20; M_{Low Candor/Low Civility} = 1.91, SD_{Low Candor/Low Civility} = 1.36), F(3, 204) = 143.10, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .68.

In Scenario 2, participants again perceived the communicator to be more civil in the two high civility conditions (M_{High Candor/High Civility} = 4.61, SD_{High Candor/High Civility} = 1.35; M_{Low Candor/High Civility} = 5.02, SD_{Low Candor/High Civility} = 1.19) than in the two low civility conditions (M_{High Candor/Low Civility} = 2.69, SD_{High Candor/Low Civility} = 1.25; M_{Low Candor/Low Civility} = 3.49, SD_{Low Candor/Low Civility} = 1.18), F(3, 205) = 38.28, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .36. Participants also perceived the communicator to be more candid in the two high candor conditions (M_{High Candor/High Civility} = 6.18, SD_{High Candor/High Civility} = 0.75; M_{High Candor/Low Civility} = 5.86, SD_{High Candor/Low Civility} = 0.93) than in the two low candor conditions (M_{Low Candor/High Civility} = 2.46, SD_{Low Candor/High Civility} = 1.28; M_{Low Candor/Low Civility} = 2.15, SD_{Low Candor/Low Civility} = 1.39), F(3, 206) = 194.37, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .74. Due to a potential violation of normality and homogeneity of variance, I also conducted the Scenario 2 candor manipulation check using a number of more robust methods recommended by Field, Miles, and Field (2012) and the pattern and the significance of the results remained the same. ANOVA can be fairly robust to assumption violations when groups sizes are approximately equal (Field et al., 2012).

Lastly before proceeding with tests of the Study 1 hypotheses, I examined whether the gender of the communicator influenced participants’ responses. Multivariate analyses of variance examining the interaction between condition and gender of the communicator indicated that there
were no significant differences on any of the variables based on whether participants read about Michael or Michelle in a given condition. There were no significant differences in perceptions of civility (Scenario 1: $F(3, 199) = 0.52, p > .05$; Scenario 2: $F(3, 201) = 0.40, p > .05$) or perceptions of candor (Scenario 1: $F(3, 199) = 0.15, p > .05$; Scenario 2: $F(3, 201) = 1.77, p > .05$) based on communicator gender. Further, there were no significant differences in perceived authenticity (Scenario 1: $F(3, 199) = 0.18, p > .05$; Scenario 2: $F(3, 201) = 0.81, p > .05$) or perceived intent (Scenario 1: $F(3, 199) = 1.43, p > .05$; Scenario 2: $F(3, 201) = 1.46, p > .05$) based on communicator gender. There were also no significant differences in ratings of likability (Scenario 1: $F(3, 199) = 0.80, p > .05$; Scenario 2: $F(3, 202) = 0.62, p > .05$) or communication effectiveness (Scenario 1: $F(3, 199) = 0.42, p > .05$; Scenario 2: $F(3, 202) = 0.40, p > .05$) based on communicator gender. Thus, all further analyses were collapsed across communicator gender.

Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations for Scenario 1 and Scenario 2 variables are presented in Tables 1 and 2, respectively. Hypothesis 1a and 1b predicted that a person who is both civil and candid when communicating at work will be perceived as more (a) authentic and (b) well-intentioned compared to a person who uses other combinations of civility and candor. In support of these hypotheses, a multivariate analysis of variance indicated that those in the high candor/high civility condition perceived the communicator in Scenario 1 to be more authentic ($M_{High Candor/High Civility} = 5.67$, $SD_{High Candor/High Civility} = 1.13$) than those in the other conditions ($M_{High Candor/Low Civility} = 4.26$, $SD_{High Candor/Low Civility} = 1.09$; $M_{Low Candor/High Civility} = 3.16$, $SD_{Low Candor/High Civility} = 1.18$; $M_{Low Candor/Low Civility} = 3.48$, $SD_{Low Candor/Low Civility} = 1.58$), $F(3, 203) = 40.15, p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .37$. Those in the high candor/high civility condition also perceived the communicator as more well-intentioned ($M_{High Candor/High Civility} = 5.62$, $SD_{High Candor/High Civility} =$
1.00) than those in the other conditions ($M_{High\ Candor/Low\ Civility} = 3.30$, $SD_{High\ Candor/Low\ Civility} = 1.03$; $M_{Low\ Candor/High\ Civility} = 4.19$, $SD_{Low\ Candor/High\ Civility} = 0.70$; $M_{Low\ Candor/Low\ Civility} = 3.13$, $SD_{Low\ Candor/Low\ Civility} = 0.83$), $F(3, 203) = 81.01$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .55$. A similar pattern of results held for Scenario 2 perceptions of authenticity ($M_{High\ Candor/High\ Civility} = 5.71$, $SD_{High\ Candor/High\ Civility} = 1.04$; $M_{High\ Candor/Low\ Civility} = 4.84$, $SD_{High\ Candor/Low\ Civility} = 1.14$; $M_{Low\ Candor/High\ Civility} = 3.17$, $SD_{Low\ Candor/High\ Civility} = 1.48$), $F(3, 205) = 52.77$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .44$, and intent ($M_{High\ Candor/High\ Civility} = 5.58$, $SD_{High\ Candor/High\ Civility} = 1.08$; $M_{High\ Candor/Low\ Civility} = 3.86$, $SD_{High\ Candor/Low\ Civility} = 1.14$; $M_{Low\ Candor/High\ Civility} = 3.46$, $SD_{Low\ Candor/High\ Civility} = 0.85$), $F(3, 205) = 48.06$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .41$. Therefore, Hypothesis 1a and 1b were supported across both Scenario 1 and Scenario 2.

Exploratory Bonferroni post hoc tests provided additional insights about appraisals of authenticity and intent beyond the high candor/high civility condition. Post hoc tests for authenticity revealed that the communicators in the two low candor conditions were also perceived as significantly less authentic than the high candor/low civility communicator (i.e., the other high candor condition) across Scenario 1 and Scenario 2. These results provide at least some initial evidence that candor might be more important for perceiving a communicator as authentic. In contrast, post hoc tests for intent revealed that the communicators in the two low civility conditions were also perceived to be significantly less well-intentioned than the low candor/high civility communicator (i.e., the other high civility condition) in Scenario 1. However, this pattern of post hoc results for intent was not fully replicated in Scenario 2 because the Scenario 2 post hoc tests showed that the high candor/low civility condition did not significantly differ from the low candor/high civility condition in perceived intent. These results
provide at least some initial evidence that civility might be more important for perceiving a communicator as well-intentioned but also indicate that situation has a role to play.

Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 4 predicted that a person who is both civil and candid when communicating at work will be seen as more likable and as a more effective communicator, respectively. In support of these hypotheses, a MANOVA indicated that those in the high candor/high civility condition perceived the communicator in Scenario 1 to be more likable ($M_{\text{High Candor/High Civility}} = 5.04$, $SD_{\text{High Candor/High Civility}} = 1.25$) than those in the other conditions ($M_{\text{High Candor/Low Civility}} = 2.90$, $SD_{\text{High Candor/Low Civility}} = 1.25$; $M_{\text{Low Candor/High Civility}} = 3.85$, $SD_{\text{Low Candor/High Civility}} = 1.13$; $M_{\text{Low Candor/Low Civility}} = 2.80$, $SD_{\text{Low Candor/Low Civility}} = 1.18$), $F(3, 203) = 38.79$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .36$, and more effective ($M_{\text{High Candor/High Civility}} = 5.31$, $SD_{\text{High Candor/High Civility}} = 0.93$) than those in the other conditions ($M_{\text{High Candor/Low Civility}} = 3.18$, $SD_{\text{High Candor/Low Civility}} = 1.16$; $M_{\text{Low Candor/High Civility}} = 2.53$, $SD_{\text{Low Candor/High Civility}} = 1.67$; $M_{\text{Low Candor/Low Civility}} = 2.63$, $SD_{\text{Low Candor/Low Civility}} = 1.49$), $F(3, 206) = 47.85$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .41$. A similar pattern of results held for Scenario 2 perceptions of likability ($M_{\text{High Candor/High Civility}} = 5.02$, $SD_{\text{High Candor/High Civility}} = 1.13$; $M_{\text{High Candor/Low Civility}} = 4.02$, $SD_{\text{High Candor/Low Civility}} = 1.41$; $M_{\text{Low Candor/High Civility}} = 3.01$, $SD_{\text{Low Candor/High Civility}} = 1.08$), $F(3, 206) = 25.64$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .27$, and communication effectiveness ($M_{\text{High Candor/High Civility}} = 5.15$, $SD_{\text{High Candor/High Civility}} = 0.96$; $M_{\text{High Candor/Low Civility}} = 3.84$, $SD_{\text{High Candor/Low Civility}} = 1.38$; $M_{\text{Low Candor/High Civility}} = 2.45$, $SD_{\text{Low Candor/High Civility}} = 1.33$; $M_{\text{Low Candor/Low Civility}} = 2.72$, $SD_{\text{Low Candor/Low Civility}} = 1.30$), $F(3, 206) = 50.15$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .42$. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 and 4 were supported across both Scenario 1 and Scenario 2.

Exploratory Bonferroni post hoc tests provided additional insights about perceptions of liking and communication effectiveness beyond the high candor/high civility condition.
However, situation appeared to play a larger role in these post hoc tests than in those for authenticity and intent. Post hoc tests for Scenario 1 liking revealed that the communicators in the two low civility conditions were also perceived as significantly less likable than the low candor/high civility communicator (i.e., the other high civility condition). However, this pattern of post hoc results for likability was not replicated in Scenario 2. Scenario 2 likability post hoc tests revealed that the high candor/low civility communicator and the low candor/high civility communicator did not significantly differ in likability, but that both were perceived as significantly more likable than the low candor/low civility communicator. Post hoc tests for Scenario 1 effectiveness revealed that beyond the high candor/high civility condition, none of the other conditions significantly differed from one another in perceived communicator effectiveness. However, this pattern of post hoc results for effectiveness was not replicated in Scenario 2. Scenario 2 effectiveness post hoc tests revealed that the communicators in the two low candor conditions were also perceived as significantly less effective than the high candor/low civility communicator (i.e., the other high candor condition).

To test Hypothesis 3a and 3b and Hypothesis 5a and 5b, I followed Hayes and Preacher’s (2014) recommended procedures for conducting mediational analyses with a multicategorical independent variable. This procedure involves the use of indicator (i.e., dummy) coding to represent the different conditions. For each of the following analyses, the high candor/high civility condition was used as the reference category, and the hypothesized relationships were tested using SPSS PROCESS Model 4, 5,000 bootstrap samples, and percentile bootstrap confidence intervals. Coefficient estimates for the models used to test Hypothesis 3a and 3b and Hypothesis 5a and 5b are presented in Table 3 (Scenario 1) and Table 4 (Scenario 2). Hypothesis 3a and 3b predicted that appraisals of (a) authenticity and (b) intent would mediate the
relationship between the candor and civility combination used by the communicator and the communicator’s likability. In support of these hypotheses, results of the Scenario 1 analysis demonstrated that both appraisals of authenticity and intent served as significant mediators of the relationship between condition and liking. Relative to the high candor/high civility condition, those in the other three conditions perceived the communicator as less authentic and less well-intentioned, which in turn resulted in less liking for the communicator in Scenario 1 (high candor/low civility: $b_{\text{indirect via authenticity}} = -0.23, 95\% \text{ CI} [-0.43, -0.06]; b_{\text{indirect via intent}} = -1.71, 95\% \text{ CI} [-2.20, -1.27];$ low candor/high civility: $b_{\text{indirect via authenticity}} = -0.42, 95\% \text{ CI} [-0.71, -0.11]; b_{\text{indirect via intent}} = -1.06, 95\% \text{ CI} [-1.42, -0.74];$ low candor/low civility: $b_{\text{indirect via authenticity}} = -0.36, 95\% \text{ CI} [-0.65, -0.09]; b_{\text{indirect via intent}} = -1.83, 95\% \text{ CI} [-2.34, -1.37]).

In contrast to Scenario 1, only appraisals of intent served as a significant mediator of the relationship between condition and liking for the communicator in Scenario 2. Relative to the high candor/high civility condition, those the other three conditions perceived the communicator as less well-intentioned, which in turn resulted in less liking for the communicator in Scenario 2 (high candor/low civility: $b_{\text{indirect via intent}} = -0.96, 95\% \text{ CI} [-1.39, -0.60];$ low candor/high civility: $b_{\text{indirect via intent}} = -0.69, 95\% \text{ CI} [-1.02, -0.43];$ low candor/low civility: $b_{\text{indirect via intent}} = -1.18, 95\% \text{ CI} [-1.66, -0.78]).$ Relative to the high candor/high civility condition, appraisals of authenticity did not serve as a significant mediator between condition and liking in Scenario 2 (high candor/low civility: $b_{\text{indirect via authenticity}} = -0.09, 95\% \text{ CI} [-0.21, 0.03];$ low candor/high civility: $b_{\text{indirect via intent}} = -0.25, 95\% \text{ CI} [-0.58, 0.09];$ low candor/low civility: $b_{\text{indirect via intent}} = -0.25, 95\% \text{ CI} [-0.58, 0.09]).$ Thus, Hypothesis 3a was supported in Scenario 1 but not in Scenario 2, and Hypothesis 3b was supported across both scenarios.

Hypothesis 5a and 5b predicted that appraisals of (a) authenticity and (b) intent would
mediate the relationship between the candor and civility combination used by the communicator and the communicator’s effectiveness. In support of these hypotheses, results of the Scenario 1 analysis demonstrated that both appraisals of authenticity and intent served as significant mediators of the relationship between condition and effectiveness. Relative to the high candor/high civility condition, those in the other three conditions perceived the communicator as less authentic and less well-intentioned, which in turn resulted in the communicator being perceived as less effective in Scenario 1 (high candor/low civility: $b_{\text{indirect via authenticity}} = -.54, 95\% \text{ CI} [-.86, -.28]; b_{\text{indirect via intent}} = -.68, 95\% \text{ CI} [-1.18, -.16];$ low candor/high civility: $b_{\text{indirect via authenticity}} = -.96, 95\% \text{ CI} [-1.39, -.56]; b_{\text{indirect via intent}} = -.42, 95\% \text{ CI} [-.74, -.10];$ low candor/low civility: $b_{\text{indirect via authenticity}} = -.84, 95\% \text{ CI} [-1.30, -.45]; b_{\text{indirect via intent}} = -.73, 95\% \text{ CI} [-1.25, -.18]).

Similarly, results of the Scenario 2 analysis demonstrated that both appraisals of authenticity and intent served as significant mediators of the relationship between condition and effectiveness. Relative to the high candor/high civility condition, those in the other three conditions perceived the communicator as less authentic and less well-intentioned, which in turn resulted in the communicator being perceived as less effective in Scenario 2 (high candor/low civility: $b_{\text{indirect via authenticity}} = -.16, 95\% \text{ CI} [-.35, -.03]; b_{\text{indirect via intent}} = -.52, 95\% \text{ CI} [-.90, -.17];$ low candor/high civility: $b_{\text{indirect via authenticity}} = -.48, 95\% \text{ CI} [-.94, -.08]; b_{\text{indirect via intent}} = -.37, 95\% \text{ CI} [-.68, -.11];$ low candor/low civility: $b_{\text{indirect via authenticity}} = -.48, 95\% \text{ CI} [-.94, -.08]; b_{\text{indirect via intent}} = -.63, 95\% \text{ CI} [-1.09, -.21]).$ Thus, Hypothesis 5a and 5b were supported across both scenarios.

Previous research suggests that even brief interactions provide us with a wealth of information about others and that people tend to form clear impressions based on “thin slices” of information (Ambady & Rosenthal, 1993). In support of this this “thin slices” view, Study 1
demonstrated that people are likely to make quick judgments about others based on how communicators choose to balance civility and candor in their workplace interactions. Further, Study 1 showed that the combinations of civility and candor that people choose to use when communicating have implications for how they are viewed and how well their message is received. Across two different situations, communicators who simultaneously used both high civility and high candor when relaying a message were perceived as more authentic and more well intentioned than communicators who used other combinations of civility and candor to get their point across. Further, these differences in perceived authenticity and intent also helped to explain why the communicator who used this combination of civility and candor, compared to the other combinations, was seen as more likable and more effective in bringing about the change desired in their message (i.e., making the meeting more productive in Scenario 1 or helping a coworker to realize their problematic behavior in Scenario 2). Therefore, the results of this initial study suggest that civility and candor may be best used jointly so as to optimize the unique benefits that civility and candor each bring to the table, benefits which can otherwise be diminished or lacking when the other or both are foregone.

Although this study provides a useful starting point in understanding the different ways that people may go about resolving the tension between civility and candor and the inferences people make about communicators when they do so, these relationships were studied via “thin slices” of information akin to first impressions. Thus, Study 1 was unable to consider the role that individual perceptions of workgroup climate might play in helping to determine which combinations of civility and candor are most likely to be well-received and whether having a pre-existing history with one another helps to cast a wider net over which combinations are or may be considered appropriate. In other words, there may be unique and various combinations of
civility and candor that are perceived as sincere and well-intentioned when considering individual perceptions of workgroup climate compared to the “thin slices” approach because workgroups with a pre-existing history may have established their own norms of communicating with one another. Thus, Study 2 expands on Study 1 by taking a psychological climate approach to examining the tension between civility and candor and the consequences for communicators (i.e., coworkers) and workgroup members (i.e., the focal individual).

**Study 2**

**The Role of Psychological Safety in Shaping Reactions to Civility and Candor**

“People in work settings are often in a good position to test their assumptions over time and uncover even the most covert and hidden intentions and motives on the part of others (Neuman & Baron, 2005, p. 32). For example, Kristin Behfar, one of the researchers behind the theory of conflict expression, suggests that as coworkers get to know one another “they may come to understand that the colleague who always seems to be undermining others isn’t malicious, she’s just a terrible communicator” (Geller, 2015, para. 4). Thus, understanding psychological climate, or employees’ perceptions of their work environment, is important for determining the impact that the tension between civility and candor has on employee appraisals and outcomes beyond thin slices of information because what works for one group may not work for another. In other words, psychological climate provides crucial information about employees’ workplace context. As such, these climate perceptions, as opposed to direct experiences, were the central focus of Study 2. In this second study, I pose psychological safety as an important component of employees’ psychological climate that influences the tension between civility and candor because psychological safety introduces an element of trust that may be essential in shaping employees’ perceptions of workplace communication and interactions (Edmondson,
1999). Similar to Study 1, Study 2 continues to examine the consequences of this tension for perceptions of authenticity and intent as well as consequences for coworkers as communicators (i.e., coworker likability and communication effectiveness). However, Study 2 also considers the impact of this tension on the focal individual through two additional employee outcomes: employees’ sense of belonging, a fundamental social need which I also alternatively refer to as loneliness throughout this paper (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), and experiences of emotional labor (i.e., surface and deep acting).

Because psychological safety is something that develops over time, it is not something we are likely to see at play in brief encounters with new interaction partners. However, it is likely to play a central role in influencing perceptions and outcomes of communication when employees have a history with one another: When employees feel psychologically safe, they perceive that interpersonal risk taking is safe within their workgroup (Edmondson, 1999). Further, psychological safety allows employees to experience a mentality that signals trust and respect and that encourages vulnerability between coworkers (Edmondson, 1999; Roussin & Webber, 2012). In fact, psychological safety typically signals high-quality work relationships (Carmeli & Gittell, 2009) whereby employees are more likely to be given the benefit of the doubt and give others the benefit of the doubt (Edmondson, 2004). Therefore, as group members get to know one another and learn about each other’s intentions and motives through social exchange, “ambiguity of intent becomes less of an issue” (Neuman & Baron, 2005, p. 29). For example, people may be less likely to take more controversial combinations of civility and candor personally when psychological safety is high because they have built a mentality of trust and respect with their coworkers. In contrast, low psychological safety may swing the pendulum in the other direction, leading employees to take these combinations more personally and see
them more negatively. In other words, it is possible that employees who feel psychologically safe within their workgroups may perceive highly blunt or highly civil styles of communication to be more authentic and well-intentioned than those who perceive lower levels of psychological safety because they have established a sense of trust that shows that such communication is coming from a good place.

Importantly, what this discussion begins to suggest is that distinct subpopulations may exist in which unique combinations of civility, candor, and psychological safety may lead to more or less positive appraisals of others’ communication intentions and authenticity as well as other outcomes. To investigate this prospect, I use an exploratory person-centered approach (e.g., Gabriel, Daniels, Diefendorff, & Gregura, 2015; Meyer & Morin, 2016), which allows for the possibility that civility, candor, and psychological safety may interact simultaneously such that there are a variety of unique ways in which they can be combined across employees to reveal different “profiles” or “mindsets” that differentially shape outcomes. Study 2 is primarily exploratory and relaxes some of the assumptions of the two-dimensional, categorical approach to civility and candor utilized in Study 1 by measuring civility and candor more continuously. This approach potentially allows for more complex profiles to emerge, adding a richness to our currently limited understanding of how civility, candor, and psychological safety interact in the workplace. A better understanding of these unique profiles and how they affect outcomes may help us to better recognize when civility and candor are most likely to be compatible or incompatible and why this perception is often in the eye of the beholder.

A Person-Centered Approach to the Tension Between Civility and Candor

Given the exploratory nature of this person-centered approach, it is currently unclear what types of profiles combining civility, candor, and psychological safety might exist.
However, previous research can provide at least some initial insight into possible profiles. Thus, the following discussion provides descriptions of hypothetical profiles that might emerge from this process. For example, because trust minimizes social threat, groups with high trust tend to experience healthier communication and conflict (O’Neill, McLarnon, Hoffart, Onen, & Rosehart, 2018). Therefore, employees who have a high sense of psychological safety may perceive a greater variety of civility and candor combinations as successful. As previously discussed, combinations that pair high civility with high candor and low civility with low candor are the most likely to be viewed fairly positively or fairly negatively, respectively. Yet, despite the positivity associated with the high candor, high civility approach, it is likely to be somewhat difficult to accomplish because it still requires a certain vulnerability in being open to others’ candid feedback (e.g., Levine & Schweitzer, 2015; Levine, 2016). Notably then, a balancing act that combines high civility and high candor may only emerge when it is paired with high psychological safety, suggesting that the benefits of candor might be most fully appreciated when trust and respect are also prioritized. Further, a combination that includes low civility and low candor is likely only to be paired with low psychological safety because this approach involves communication that is undermining in nature (e.g., Cortina et al., 2001; Weingart et al., 2015).

In contrast, combinations that pair low civility with high candor or high civility with low candor are likely to be more complex to understand when employees have a history with one another. For example, pairing low civility with high candor tends to be a controversial combination that has people standing on both sides of the fence, reflecting that open communication has the simultaneous potential to both help and harm work relationships and performance (Chun & Choi, 2014; Rawlins, 1983). Consequently, employees who experience a
low civility, high candor combination with a high sense of psychological safety may have very different perceptions of others’ sincerity and intent compared with those who experience this combination with a low sense of psychological safety. Previous research suggests why this may be the case.

Typically, we think of incivility as having primarily negative outcomes; yet, recently scholars have suggested that it is possible for incivility to also be functional (Miner et al., 2018). For example, rather than indicating rudeness and dysfunction, candid but stereotypically “uncivil” communication such as swearing, teasing, and blunt delivery may sometimes serve to build solidarity and cohesion within groups (Baruch & Jenkins, 2007; Daly, Holmes, Newton, & Stubb, 2004). Thus, a high candor, low civility combination can sometimes be perceived as constructive and authentic, encouraging a sense of closeness among group members. For employees in this situation, this combination would not be considered exhausting or isolating, but rather would be a symbol of friendship within the group (e.g., Daly et al., 2004). Thus, employees who work in groups where these candid interactions signal closeness are likely to make inferences about a high candor, low civility approach in a different way than others because they and their group have built a sense of psychological safety that indicates they need not fear that they will be rejected, be embarrassed, or experience negative sanctions by others (Edmondson, 1999). In other words, high candor and high psychological safety may signal a give and take relationship where employees give their coworkers the benefit of the doubt and feel that their coworkers will do the same in return.

In contrast, when these candid, uncivil communication patterns are not rooted in solidarity, a low sense of psychological safety is likely to ensue and shape perceptions accordingly. For employees in this situation, low psychological safety may support appraisals
that others have mean-spirited or threatening motives (e.g., Daly et al., 2004; Edmondson, 1999) when using a high candor, low civility approach, leading employees to feel rejected and more emotionally exhausted by having to navigate difficult interactions. In other words, “one person's idea of candor may be another's definition of thoughtlessness” (Gardner, 2004, para. 4) depending on one’s level of psychological safety. Further, beyond thoughtlessness, Miner et al. (2018) posited that such “uncivil” behavior could also serve as an intentional means by which coworkers drive out those who do not fit in within their group.

Because workgroups develop unique styles of communicating with one another (Daly et al., 2004), pairing low candor with high civility also tends to be a controversial combination. Generally, positive views of a high civility, low candor approach stem from the idea that civility is a virtue that can help foster community and increase inclusion (Calabrese, 2015; White, 2006). For example, both the Civility, Respect, and Engagement in the Workplace (CREW) program and Civility Among Healthcare Professionals (CAHP) program, training interventions aimed at enhancing civility and communication among employees, frame civility and civil discourse as a foundational means to build community in organizations (Graham, Zweber, & Magley, 2013; Leiter et al., 2011; Walsh & Magley, 2013). To some extent, these programs imply that civility is synonymous with psychological safety and that “restraint” (i.e., muted candor) is sometimes necessary for positive environments (Lane & McCourt, 2013). Thus, people who see candor as a poor guise for brutal honesty may perceive a high civility, low candor approach to be much more well-intentioned and authentic when their psychological safety is high. Although still a relatively young literature, research on civility tends to support this view by showing that employees working in more civil environments tend to be more satisfied, more committed, and less cynical (Leiter et al., 2011; Walsh et al., 2012).
However, some people flourish in environments that use more direct approaches to communicate as opposed to “conventionally polite” approaches (Daly et al., 2004). Thus, those who see civility as a superficial façade intended to silence voices for the sake of social harmony (Calabrese, 2015; Scott, 2015) may perceive a high civility, low candor approach to be much more harmful and inauthentic when their psychological safety is low. In this view, civility is often the antithesis to psychological safety and candor, leading those who are silenced to feel resentful and to perceive that civility is fake or manipulative in its intent to suppress honest input or opinion. In other words, when this combination is paired with low psychological safety, people may feel excluded and exhausted through the need to keep up with a charade of civility in their workgroup.

As the above discussion reveals, there are numerous ways in which different profiles might emerge in this study to capture how psychological climate perceptions of civility, candor, and psychological safety might vary and interact differently across different individuals. Summaries of the hypothetical profiles discussed above can be found in Table 5, with the important caveat that these are only examples of possible profiles. Given the variety of ways in which civility, candor, and psychological safety might combine, Study 2 aims to explore the possible profiles that might emerge in more detail to better understand how people appraise and respond to the tension between civility and candor. Thus, Study 2 is motivated by the following exploratory research questions:

*Research Question 1:* Do distinct latent profiles of work communication exist that vary in levels of civility, candor, and psychological safety?

*Research Question 2:* Do these profiles differentially relate to perceptions of coworkers’ authenticity and intentions?
How Profiles of Civility, Candor, and Psychological Safety Shape Employee Outcomes

The above discussion shows how civility, candor, and psychological safety may combine in unique and interesting ways to determine how employees appraise the sincerity and intent of others when they communicate. But what are the consequences of these profiles and perceptions? Positive appraisals of workplace communication are important because “people know where they stand with sincere individuals and feel able to open up in conversation because there is no fear of reprisal or betrayal” (Mulvey, 2012, para. 4). Similar to Study 1, I consider whether the emerging profiles depicting the tension between civility and candor are related to perceptions of authenticity and intent as well as coworker likability and coworker communication effectiveness. However, because communication is an essential part of building work relationships and threat appraisals are associated with depleted resources (Palmwood & McBride, 2017), I also consider consequences for the focal individual, such as employees’ experiences of workplace loneliness and emotional labor as important outcomes of the tension between civility and candor.

According to Baumeister and Leary (1995), people are strongly motivated by a fundamental need to belong and to be valued and recognized by others. Importantly, people assess whether this need has been met using cues in their social environment to determine whether they fit in. Thus, employees’ assessments of others’ civility and candor and their own level of psychological safety may shape whether they perceive that their workgroup members are sincere and have good intentions in their communication, and signal whether or not they are part of the in-group. For example, behavior that signals positive affect among group members is likely to strengthen in-group relationship quality and cohesion (Walter & Bruch, 2008). Further, respectful interactions form the basis of high-quality relationships (Dutton, 2003). Because authentic displays are related to more positive emotions and higher rapport building between
individuals (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2006), profiles that lead employees to see others’ intentions as sincere and well-meaning may also be associated with employees feeling closer to their coworkers.

In contrast, profiles that lead to perceptions that others are being insincere and have poor intentions when they communicate using civility and candor may be associated with threats to employees’ sense of belonging (i.e., more loneliness). This is because insincerity and poor intentions can signal that work colleagues do not value building strong relationships with others. People who perceive others’ communication to be intentionally hurtful report feeling less satisfied in their relationship with the communicator and feeling a lower sense of closeness to the communicator (Vangelisti & Young, 2000). Further, people who feel highly disregarded (e.g., the communicator does not care about them) when receiving a message that they perceive as intentionally harmful are more likely to distance themselves from the person who hurt them (Vangelisti & Young, 2000). Similarly, research on incivility, a behavior that typically demonstrates low regard, has shown that employees experiencing incivility report feeling more socially isolated and embarrassed and also more psychologically distressed (Caza & Cortina, 2007; Hirschcovis, Ogunfowora, Reich, & Christie, 2017). In other words, coworker communication styles may serve as a signal to employees about whether they have been granted group membership. Thus, employees who perceive that the way in which their workgroup balances civility and candor is inauthentic and mal-intentioned may also feel that they do not fit it or belong in their workgroup.

Because people use prior information to help shape their judgments of others (Gabriel, Acosta, & Grandey, 2015), perceptions of sincerity and intent stemming from combinations of civility, candor, and psychological safety are also likely to influence the type of emotional labor
employees experience. Emotional labor refers to the management of one’s emotions in the work role, which is often shaped by emotional requirements of the work environment (Diefendorff, Croyle, & Gosserand, 2005; Hochschild, 1983). For example, employees can engage in surface acting, which involves faking or suppressing emotions to meet expectations, or deep acting, which involves internally modifying one’s emotions to genuinely match the emotions displayed (Diefendorff et al., 2005; Hochschild, 1983). Whereas research shows that surface acting is often a response to negative events and is more costly than deep acting, deep acting may be more likely in response to positive events or pleasant encounters (Grandey & Melloy, 2017).

Notably, employee appraisals are important for determining whether or not situations deplete employees’ emotional resources (Palmwood & McBride, 2017). For example, if we feel psychologically safe and perceive that our coworkers are consistently civil while also being candid, we can potentially assume that they will be civil again in the future and we can trust their candid input to have good intentions. Thus, how people express themselves helps to shape the emotions, inferences made by, and behaviors of others (Hareli & Rafaeli, 2008). Therefore, employees may be less likely to fake or suppress their emotions (i.e., surface act) and more likely to try to genuinely feel the emotions they display (i.e., deep act) if they believe others’ intentions are good and sincere because they do not need to spend their psychological resources anticipating and dealing with perceived threats.

In contrast, research shows that people who do perceive a behavior as intentionally harmful are more likely to believe that the behavior will occur again (Vangelisti & Young, 2000), reinforcing the social nature of emotions and workplace interactions (Hareli & Rafaeli, 2008). Notably, relational quality is important for determining emotional expectations and demands (Grandey & Melloy, 2017), such that employees have been found to exert more control
over their emotional expressions through masking behaviors and neutralizing emotions in situations where they perceive low closeness or solidarity with others and to exert less control when closeness is high (Diefendorff, Morehart, & Gabriel, 2010). Further, research also shows that employees who have been treated unjustly engage in more emotional labor and show more inauthentic emotions compared to those who were treated fairly (Rupp & Spencer, 2006). Thus, profiles that lead employees to perceive that others are insincere and mal-intentioned in their communication are likely to respond to these negative intentions by engaging in behaviors, like surface acting, that drain and exhaust their own emotional resources. In other words, employees’ perceptions of how their coworkers communicate are likely to influence how employees present themselves in return such that deep acting may be more likely in positively-focused profiles and surface acting more likely in negatively-focused profiles. Thus, I propose the following questions:

*Research Question 3:* Do these profiles differentially relate to coworker outcomes (coworker likability, coworker communication effectiveness)?

*Research Question 4:* Do these profiles differentially relate to employee outcomes (loneliness, surface acting, deep acting?)

**Accounting for Individual Differences and Demographic Factors**

Although much of this dissertation focuses on the outcomes of the tension between civility and candor at work, it is also interesting to consider what might shape some of this tension in the first place from both a theory-building and practical perspective. Thus, I also consider whether certain individual difference and demographic factors play a role in predicting the profiles to which employees belong. The two individual differences I explore are core self-evaluations, a general self-assessment of one’s worth and capabilities (Chang, Ferris, Johnson,
Rosen, & Tan, 2012), and feedback seeking behavior, a form of proactive behavior or impression management that has both personality-based and contextual-based components (Ashford, De Stobbeleir, & Nujella, 2016).

Core self-evaluations may be important for employees’ profile membership because core self-evaluations are thought to influence outcomes through both positive spillover and by directly influencing people’s appraisals and actions (Chang et al., 2012). Further, those with high core self-evaluations tend to be more responsive to positive information and less sensitive to negative information when appraising situations (Chang et al., 2012). Thus, employees with higher core self-evaluations may not only be more likely view their workgroup’s level of civility and candor in a positive light but also may influence how their coworkers respond to the them through self-fulfilling prophecy (i.e., positively begets positivity).

Feedback seeking behavior may also be important for employees’ profile membership because feedback seeking can enlighten individuals to desired behaviors and reduce uncertainty (Ashford & Cummings, 1983). By pointing them to desired behaviors, research shows that employees engaging in feedback seeking increase their social integration and increase their openness to future feedback (Ashford et al., 2016). Thus, employees who tend to engage in more feedback seeking may consequently experience more psychological safety and encounter more desirable combinations of civility and candor from their coworkers due to reduced ambiguity. Although I explore feedback seeking behavior from an individual difference perspective, it is also likely that there exists a reciprocal relationship such that the level of civility and candor one experiences from coworkers, in turn, influences continued feedback seeking.

Additionally, employees’ demographic characteristics, such as their gender and race, might also play a role in predicting profile membership. The theory of selective incivility
suggests why this might occur. According to selective incivility theory, women and people of color may be at a higher risk for experiencing incivility because incivility may serve as a modern form of covert sexism and racism in the workplace (Cortina, 2008). In support of the theory, Cortina, Kabat-Farr, Leskinen, Huerta, & Magley (2013) found that women and people of color tend to report more incivility experiences than other demographic groups (i.e., men and Whites). Using this line of thinking, it may be the case that women and people of color are consequently more likely to belong to communication profiles characterized by low civility.

Extending this role of demographic characteristics, the gender and racial/ethnic composition of employees’ workgroups may also impact the communication profile to which employees belong. Research on the impact of diversity in teams suggests that in-groups and out-groups have a tendency to form based on demographic similarity and that diversity tends to have a complex (i.e., at times positive and at times negative) relationship with workplace communication patterns, conflict, and social cohesion (Jackson & Joshi, 2011). Thus, the gender diversity or racial and ethnic diversity of employees’ workgroups might influence the level of civility and candor they experience from coworkers. Thus, I propose the following question:

*Research Question 5:* Do individual differences (i.e., feedback seeking behavior and core self-evaluations) and demographic factors (i.e., gender, race/ethnicity, workgroup gender composition, and workgroup racial/ethnic composition) predict employees’ profile membership?

Although these factors are certainly not the only individual difference and demographic factors that may be important in the context of shaping the civility and candor relationship, they serve as starting points for discussion in this regard.

Overall, the main objective of Study 2 was to investigate if there are distinct profiles of
work communication that vary according to civility, candor, and psychological safety and to examine whether these profiles differentially relate to a number of important appraisals and outcomes. In particular, Study 2 serves as a complementary but distinct extension of Study 1 by examining the additional role of psychological climate perceptions in how the tension between civility and candor plays out in the workplace. By focusing on these climate perceptions, Study 2 serves to add a particular richness to the exploration of how employees view the tension between civility and candor within their work environments because experience is often a matter of perception in the first place.

Method

Participants and procedure. Working adults were invited to complete an online survey about their workplace interactions via three methods. First, I utilized snowball sampling recruiting procedures using student recruiters in an undergraduate psychology class. Student recruiters were asked to provide the survey link to individuals they knew who were employed full-time (30 or more hours per week) and above the age of 18. Because many of the survey questions asked about the participant’s coworkers, only participants who responded “yes” to the question, “Do you have at least one coworker with whom you interact with on a regular basis?” were included in the final sample. Students received course credit for their recruiting efforts. A total of 82 eligible working adults responded to the survey through this method. Second, using the same eligibility criteria, additional working adults were recruited by sharing the survey with my social media network. A total of 68 eligible participants were recruited using this method. Lastly, additional participants were recruited via Qualtrics’ Online Sample Service. Qualtrics’ Online Sample Service maintains a database of people willing to participate in online surveys in exchange for “points” which participants can accumulate and redeem for various rewards. In
addition to the previously-mentioned eligibility criteria utilized in the other two recruitment methods, working adults recruited using this third method were also screened such that they had to reside within the U.S. and had to commit to thoughtfully providing their best answers to the survey questions. A total of 531 eligible working adults were recruited using this method. A number of Industrial and Organizational Psychology scholars have provided evidence that online samples, such as the one used here, are likely to provide reliable data that is representative of the general workforce as long as the sample is appropriate for the given research question (Landers & Behrend, 2015; Roulin, 2015).

Thus, a total of 681 working adults participated in the survey across the three recruitment methods. Participants were employed across a variety of occupations including management (14.1%), business and financial operations (11.2%), office and administrative support (9.3%), education, training, and library (8.2%), and sales (7.9%). The average age of participants in the final sample was 40.31 years old ($SD_{age} = 12.33$). On average, participants had worked for their organization for 8.45 years ($SD_{org.\ tenure} = 7.59$) and had held their current position for 6.75 years ($SD_{job\ tenure} = 6.81$). The majority of participants were White (72%) and a slight majority were female (52.9%). When it came to the gender composition of their workgroup, 28.6% of participants said that they worked with mostly men, 35.8% said that they worked with mostly women, and 35.6% said that the gender composition of their workgroup was fairly even. When it came to the racial/ethnic composition of their workgroup, 46.7% of participants indicated that they were working with coworkers who were mostly of the same race or ethnicity as themselves, 14.9% indicated that they were working with coworkers who were of mostly a different race or ethnicity as themselves, and 38.4% indicated that they were working with coworkers of a wide variety of variety of races and ethnicities.
Measures. Civility, candor, appraisals of authenticity, appraisals of intent, liking, and communication effectiveness were all measured using the same items described in Study 1, with the exception that item stems were changed to reference the participant’s coworkers. As mentioned in Study 1, because adequate pre-existing measures do not currently exist for measuring candor and appraisals of authenticity and intent, I used measures I designed specifically for these studies. However, all other constructs were assessed using published measures. Additionally, participants were also asked to respond about their feedback seeking behavior and core self-evaluations to account for the potential importance of individual differences in how people perceive others’ civility and candor. All items for Study 2 are listed in Appendix C.

Psychological safety was measured using a seven-item scale developed by Edmondson (1999) on a scale of 1 (‘strongly disagree’) to 7 (‘strongly agree’). Sample items include: “If you make a mistake at work, it is often held against you” and “No one in my workgroup would deliberately act in a way that undermines my efforts.”

Loneliness was measured using a version of the 20-item UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell, Peplau, & Cutrona, 1980) that was adapted by Ozcelik and Barsade (2018) to fit the workplace. Participants were asked to rate the degree to which the items reflected how they feel about their work experiences on a scale of 1 (‘strongly disagree’) to 5 (‘strongly agree’). Sample items include, “I feel isolated from my coworkers” and “My social relationships in my workgroup are superficial.”

Surface acting was measured using seven items from Diefendorff et al. (2005). Participants were asked to rate the degree to which the items reflected their experiences on a scale of 1 (‘strongly disagree’) to 5 (‘strongly agree’). The wording of the items was adapted to
reference “my coworkers” rather than “customers.” A sample item includes: “I show feelings to my coworkers that are different from what I feel inside.”

Deep acting was measured using four items from Diefendorff et al. (2005). Participants were asked to rate the degree to which the items reflected their experiences on a scale of 1 (‘strongly disagree’) to 5 (‘strongly agree’). The wording of the items was adapted to reference “my coworkers” rather than “customers.” A sample item includes: “I work hard to feel the emotions that I need to show to my coworkers.”

Core self-evaluations was measured using a 12-item scale developed by Judge, Erez, Bono, and Thoresen (2003) on a scale of 1 (‘strongly disagree’) to 5 (‘strongly agree’). Sample items include: “When I try, I generally succeed” and “I am confident I get the success I deserve in life.”

Feedback seeking behavior was measured using five items adapted from Ashford (1986) and Morrison (1993) that assess self-reported feedback seeking behavior. Participants were asked to rate how frequently they “ask for feedback on technical aspects of your job,” “ask for feedback on role expectations (e.g., what is expected of you in your job),” “ask for feedback on your social behaviors at work,” “seek information from your coworkers about your work performance,” and “seek information from your supervisor about your work performance” on scale from 1 (‘never’) to 6 (‘very frequently’).

Demographics questionnaire. Participants were asked to report their gender, race, and age as well as the gender composition of their workgroup, the racial/ethnic composition of their workgroup, whether they have supervisor responsibilities, their job title, and job tenure.

Analysis Strategy

All analyses were conducted using Mplus version 7.3 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2017).
First to explore Research Question 1, I conducted a latent profile analysis (LPA) using guidelines from Morin, Morizot, Boudrias, and Madore (2011), Nylund, Asparouhov, and Muthén (2007), and Vandenberg (2016) to identify latent profiles of civility, candor, and psychological safety. Latent profile analysis uses an inductive approach to identify the optimal LPA solution, which determines the number of unique profiles (Nylund et al., 2007). Currently, no clear rules of thumb or guidelines have been developed around sample size requirements for person-centered approaches; however, it is clear that larger samples (e.g., > 500) allow for more complex profiles to be tested (Meyer & Morin, 2016).

Person-centered approaches are particularly well-suited to detect complex interactions such as the ones proposed in this study (Meyer & Morin, 2016). This type of approach is also useful for identifying profiles that can differ quantitatively and qualitatively (Marsh, Lüdtke, Trautwein, & Morin, 2009). For example, profiles can differ quantitatively such that they have uniformly low, medium, or high ratings across all constructs included in the profile (e.g., a high civility, high candor, and high psychological safety profile versus a low civility, low candor, and low psychological safety profile). Profiles can also differ qualitatively such that the profiles have different shapes (e.g., a high civility, low candor, medium psychological safety profile versus a low civility, high candor, low psychological safety profile). Therefore, the goal of this analysis strategy is to further understand the role psychological climate (i.e., psychological safety) plays in shaping appraisals of civility and candor, providing additional information about how people make inferences beyond what the “thin slices” approach in Study 1 was able to capture.

I began by first specifying two latent profiles and then used both theory and recommended fit statistics to determine whether I should continue specifying an additional number of latent profiles. As recommended by Morin et al. (2011) and Nylund et al. (2007), I
ensured that all models tested successfully replicated the best log likelihood value using 800 random sets of start values, increasing confidence that the models did not simply converge on a local solution. As also recommended by Morin et al. (2011) and Nylund et al. (2007), I used a variety of fit criteria to compare the different latent profile solutions: the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC), the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC), the sample-size adjusted BIC (SABIC), the Lo-Mendell-Rubin adjusted likelihood ratio test (LMR), the parametric bootstrapped likelihood ratio test (BLRT), and the entropy. For these fit statistics, lower values on the AIC, BIC, and SABIC are indicative of a better model fit and significant LMR and BLRT p-values (p < .05) are indicative that a given solution is favored over a solution with one less profile (Morin et al., 2011). For entropy, a value closer to one is considered better because it indicates that the profile solution will have fewer classification errors and clearer separation of the profiles (Morin et al., 2011). Beyond fit statistics, I also considered the theoretical meaning and interpretability of the different profile solutions when selecting a final model.

After establishing the latent profiles, I used the profiles as predictor variables to determine how they relate to the outcomes presented in Research Question 2 - 4. To do so, I used the automatic BCH approach (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2018) in Mplus to determine whether the profiles significantly differed from one another on each of the dependent variables. A primary concern with latent profile analysis is that a standard approach that jointly combines profile formation with the regression model predicting outcomes can lead to an undesired shift in the latent profiles, potentially causing them to lose their originally intended meaning. This is because the profiles may no longer be measured by the latent profile indicator variables alone but may also be impacted by the dependent variables (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2018). Thus, the benefit of the BCH approach is that it models the relationships in a series of steps as a way of avoiding
these unwanted shifts. In other words, the latent profile analysis is first modeled independently of the regression model. Then assuming the profiles are known, the BCH approach combines the profiles with the dependent variables (i.e., distal outcomes) in an auxiliary regression model using weighted multigroup analyses (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2018). This step is used to test for equality of means across the profiles via a chi-square test and to provide a series of pairwise comparisons between each of the profiles to determine whether they significantly differ on the outcomes of interest (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2018). Asparouhov and Muthén (2018) recommend the BCH method as the preferred approach for examining continuous distal outcomes in mixture modeling.

Lastly, I conducted a series of multinomial logistic regressions examining whether the individual difference variables (i.e., feedback seeking behavior and core self-evaluations) and demographic variables (i.e., gender, race/ethnicity, workgroup gender composition, and workgroup racial/ethnic composition) presented in Research Question 5 had an influence on profile membership. To examine these variables as predictors of profile membership, I used the R3STEP approach in Mplus (Asparouhov and Muthén, 2014). All four demographic variables were dummy coded before performing the analyses.

**Results & Discussion**

Overall means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations for Study 2 variables are presented in Table 6. Further, Table 7 provides a summary of the fit statistics for each of the latent profile solutions tested. In examining the fit statistics, the log likelihood, AIC, BIC, SABIC, BLRT, and entropy slightly favored the five-profile solution whereas the LMR favored the four-profile solution. In conjunction with these fit statistics, I also considered the theoretical meaning that could be drawn from the profiles across these different solutions. The five-profile
model revealed a profile of additional theoretical value (moderate psychological safety, high civility, low candor) that the four-profile solution did not. Further, it is interesting to note that the six-profile model also revealed an additional profile that was of theoretical interest (low psychological safety, low civility, high candor). However, because this 6th profile had a very small number of members \((n = 5)\) and the LMR \(p\)-value did not originally favor progressing beyond a five-profile solution (Nylund et al., 2007), I did not examine the six-profile model further. Notably, method scholars have suggested a few guidelines when examining fit statistics for latent profile analysis. First, the results of simulation studies suggest that because the \(p\)-values from the LMR test can be somewhat fickle, the first time the LMR displays a \(p\)-value above .05 “might be a good indication to stop increasing the number of classes” (Nylund et al., 2007, p. 563). However, simulation studies have also demonstrated that the BLRT shows a clear advantage over the LMR in identifying the correct model (Nylund et al., 2007). Thus, when the BLRT and LMR diverge, it is important to consider the BLRT in conjunction with the BIC, which also tends to perform well, to help select the final profile solution (Nylund et al., 2007). Thus, based on a combination of the model fit statistics, these guidelines, and the theoretical meaning that could be drawn from the profiles, I selected the five-profile solution as the final model.

Table 8 reports descriptive information and confidence intervals for each of the workplace communication profiles (see Figure 2 for an illustration). It is important to note that although I chose to name the profiles in a way that mirrors the language used in Study 1 (i.e., low candor/low civility), psychological safety is still an important component of the Study 2 profiles. The first latent profile, which I labeled the “low candor/low civility” profile described 3.7% of the sample. These employees reported low psychological safety \((M = 2.82)\) and reported that
their coworkers tend to use low civility \((M = 1.93)\) and low candor \((M = 2.71)\) when communicating with one another. Those in the second latent profile, which I labeled the “low candor/high civility” profile \((2.5\%)\), displayed moderate levels of psychological safety \((M = 4.01)\) and reported that their coworkers tend to use high civility \((M = 5.81)\) but low candor \((M = 2.82)\) when communicating with one another. It is interesting that although these two profiles were small in size, the fit statistics clearly suggested that they were meaningful, unique groups. Those in the third latent profile, which I labeled the “moderate candor/moderate civility” profile \((14.7\%)\), reported moderate levels of all three communication indicators \((M_{\text{psychological safety}} = 3.96; M_{\text{coworker civility}} = 4.13; M_{\text{coworker candor}} = 4.04)\). Those in the last two profiles reported fairly positive workgroup communication. The “high candor/high civility” group \((46.2\%)\), who displayed moderate-to-high levels of all three communication indicators \((M_{\text{psychological safety}} = 4.71; M_{\text{coworker civility}} = 5.67; M_{\text{coworker candor}} = 5.21)\), and the “very high candor/very high civility” group \((32.9\%)\), who displayed high-to-very high levels of all three communication indicators \((M_{\text{psychological safety}} = 5.62; M_{\text{coworker civility}} = 6.69; M_{\text{coworker candor}} = 6.24)\), reflected the profiles with the largest memberships in the sample. Given these results, the answer to Research Question 1 appears to be “yes,” there are distinct latent profiles of work communication that vary in levels of civility, candor, and psychological safety.

Table 9 provides information about how each of the workplace communication profiles relates to the outcomes of interest (see Figure 3 for an illustration). Specifically, Table 9 provides information about the overall chi-square test of statistical significance for each of the outcomes as well as the statistical significance of the pairwise comparisons made between each of the profiles on the various outcomes, which I discuss in more detail below. Research Question 2 asked whether employees belonging to the different communication profiles would significantly
differ in their perceptions of their coworkers’ authenticity and intentions. Compared with employees in the other four profiles, those in the very high candor/very high civility profile had the most positive appraisals of their coworkers’ communication. Employees in this profile reported that their coworkers’ communication styles were both highly authentic ($M = 6.33$) and very well-intentioned ($M = 6.23$). After the very high candor/very high civility profile, those in the high candor/high civility profile reported the next highest levels of coworker authenticity ($M = 4.98$) and intent ($M = 5.07$). In contrast, those in the three remaining profiles perceived their coworkers’ communication styles to be significantly less authentic and less well-intentioned. Unsurprisingly, those in the moderate candor/moderate civility profile reported that their coworkers’ communication styles were somewhat more authentic ($M = 3.73$) than those in low candor/low civility profile ($M = 2.46$) whereas those in the low candor/high civility profile fell between these two in terms of coworker authenticity ($M = 3.24$). When it came to intentions, those in the low candor/low civility profile reported that their coworkers were the least well-intentioned ($M = 2.49$) compared to the other profiles. Those in the low candor/high civility profile and those in the moderate candor/moderate civility profile did not significantly differ in their ratings of intentions ($M = 3.57$ and $M = 4.08$, respectively); however, because both groups reported that their coworkers had better intentions than those in the low candor/low civility profile, it appears that some level of civility and psychological safety is necessary for positive intent perceptions. Thus, the answer to Research Question 2 appears to be “yes,” employees across the various communication profiles seem to differ in their perceptions of coworkers’ authenticity and intentions.

Research Question 3 asked whether employees belonging to the different workplace communication profiles would significantly differ in how likable they find their coworkers and
how effective they perceive their coworkers’ communication styles to be. Again, compared with employees in the other profiles, those in the very high candor/very high civility profile rated their coworkers as the most likable ($M = 6.57$) and the most effective in bringing about positive change via their communication style ($M = 6.23$) followed by those in the high candor/high civility profile ($M_{likability} = 5.59; M_{effectiveness} = 4.75$). In contrast, those in the low candor/low civility profile rated their coworkers as the least likable ($M = 3.54$) compared to the other profiles. Falling somewhere in the middle, those in the low candor/high civility profile and those in the moderate candor/moderate civility profile did not significantly differ in coworker likability ($M = 4.64$ and $M = 4.36$, respectively), suggesting again a small benefit of civility and psychological safety in boosting perceptions of coworker likability. In terms of communication effectiveness, those in the moderate candor/moderate civility profile rated their coworkers as somewhat more effective in bringing about positive change ($M = 3.57$) than those in the low candor/high civility profile ($M = 2.68$) and those in the low candor/low civility profile ($M = 1.85$), suggesting that at least some level of candor may be necessary for communication effectiveness. Thus, the answer to Research Question 3 appears to be “yes,” employees across the various communication profiles seem to differ in their perceptions of their coworkers’ likability and communication effectiveness.

Research Question 4 asked whether employees belonging to the different communication profiles would significantly differ in the level of loneliness they experience at work and the extent to which they engage in surface acting and deep acting with their coworkers. Compared with employees in the other profiles, those in the very high candor/very high civility profile reported the lowest levels of workplace loneliness ($M = 1.75$) followed by those in the high candor/high civility profile ($M_{loneliness} = 2.27$), suggesting that employees may experience greater
feelings of workplace belongingness when they feel psychologically safe and their workgroup strongly prioritizes both honest and respectful communication. In comparison, those in the low candor/low civility profile, those in the low candor/high civility profile, and those in the moderate candor/moderate civility profile similarly reported slightly higher levels of loneliness ($M = 3.09$, $M = 2.91$, and $M = 2.85$, respectively).

In terms of emotional labor, those in the very high candor/very high civility profile reported engaging in the lowest levels of surface acting ($M = 1.86$), followed by those in the high candor/high civility profile ($M_{\text{surface acting}} = 2.57$). In comparison, those in low candor/low civility profile, those in the low candor/high civility profile, and those in the moderate candor/moderate civility profile reported moderate levels of surface acting ($M = 3.57$, $M = 3.12$ and $M = 3.19$, respectively), suggesting that lower psychological safety is associated with greater faking of emotions around colleagues. Across the profiles, employees did not appear to differ in levels of deep acting with the only exception being that those in the low candor/high civility profile appeared to engage in slightly less deep acting than those in the moderate, high, and very high profiles. Thus, the answer to Research Question 4 appears to be “yes” and “no”: employees across the various profiles seem to differ in the amount of loneliness they experience and the extent to which they surface act, but they do not appear to differ in the extent to which they deep act.

Table 10 provides information about how the various individual difference and demographic predictors related to profile membership (Research Question 5). Results of the multinomial logistic regression analyses revealed that feedback seeking behavior was not a significant predictor of profile membership, with the only exception being that those higher in feedback seeking behavior were more likely to be members of the very high candor/very high
civility profile than members of the low candor/high civility profile. In contrast, core self-evaluations did significantly predict profile membership. The results showed that employees with higher core self-evaluations were more likely to be members of the low candor/high civility profile, the high candor/high civility profile or, in particular, the very high candor/very high civility profile and less likely to be members of the low candor/low civility or moderate candor/moderate civility profiles. These results suggest that a having a positive self-concept may be associated with employees perceiving or experiencing more civility and/or candor from their coworkers.

Neither gender nor race served as significant predictors of profile membership with the only exception being that women were somewhat more likely than men to be in the low candor/low civility profile compared to the moderate candor/moderate civility profile. Workgroup gender composition also did not serve as a significant predictor of profile membership with the only exception being that those belonging to workgroups consisting of about equal ratios of men and women were slightly more likely than those belonging to workgroups consisting of mostly men to be in the very high candor/very high civility profile compared to the high candor/high civility profile.

In contrast, the racial/ethnic composition of employees’ workgroups was a significant predictor of profile membership. Those belonging to workgroups with coworkers representing a wide variety of races/ethnicities were significantly less likely than those belonging to workgroups consisting of coworkers of mainly the same race/ethnicity as themselves to be in the low candor/low civility profile compared to the other four profiles. Further, those belonging to workgroups consisting of coworkers of mainly a different race/ethnicity than themselves were significantly less likely than those belonging to workgroups consisting of coworkers of mainly
the same race/ethnicity as themselves to be in the low candor/high civility profile compared to the other four profiles. It is important to note that these two findings regarding employees’ workgroup racial/ethnic composition should be interpreted with caution given the small profile sizes for the low candor/high civility group (n = 17) and the low candor/low civility group (n = 25) that could make small variations appear large. Moreover, given that only 14.9% of the sample indicated that they belonged to a workgroup consisting of coworkers of mainly a different race/ethnicity than themselves, it may be the case that the corresponding finding could vary in a larger sample. Thus, the answer to Research Question 5 appears to be “yes” and “no” (with caution): whereas core self-evaluations and one’s workgroup racial/ethnic composition were somewhat predictive of an employee’s profile membership, feedback seeking behavior, gender, race, and one’s workgroup gender composition were generally not.

Taken together, the results of Study 2 reveal additional insights into the ways in which employees perceive psychological safety, civility, and candor in their workgroup and how these psychological climate perceptions of work communication influence appraisals and outcomes. First, I found support for five distinct profiles of work communication: four profiles that differed quantitatively, such that they had either uniformly low, moderate, high, or very high ratings across psychological safety, civility, and candor, and one profile that differed qualitatively, such that the profile had a unique shape (i.e., the low candor/high civility profile). Therefore, with the exception of the low candor/high civility profile, psychological safety, civility, and candor consistently varied with one another within profile. Further, as predicted, a high candor/high civility approach only emerged when psychological safety was high, and a low candor/low civility approach only emerged when psychological safety was low. Thus, employees’ psychological safety is likely highly intertwined with their perceptions of their coworkers’
civility and candor. Further, employees’ self-views are likely to play a role here.

Second, I found that certain profiles of work communication are more likely to be detrimental whereas others are more likely to be beneficial for both employees and their coworkers, speaking to the tension between civility and candor in the workplace. In particular, employees belonging to profiles where they felt psychologically safe and have coworkers who speak both civilly and candidly reported the most positive work experiences. Employees in these profiles said that their coworkers are not only highly authentic and well-intentioned when communicating but are also simultaneously likable and effective in bringing about change through their communication. Additionally, employees in these profiles experienced a number of benefits themselves, reporting lower levels of workplace loneliness and lower levels of faking emotions through surface acting. In contrast, employees belonging to profiles where they felt less psychologically safe and have coworkers who speak less civilly and less candidly experienced the opposite: higher loneliness and surface acting and less authentic and well-intentioned coworkers, who are less likable and less effective in bringing about change through their communication. Overall, the findings from Study 2 provide further evidence that the benefits of civility and candor may be best enjoyed when they are utilized jointly, and employees feel psychologically safe. Thus, psychological climate perceptions appear to play a key role in understanding the tension between civility and candor at work.

**General Discussion**

Across both studies, I found that workplace communication that is perceived to be both highly civil and highly candid brings a number of advantages to employees and their coworkers that are unmatched by the returns provided by communication combining civility and candor in other ways. At a situation level, communicators who utilized a high candor/high civility
communication strategy to address both an unproductive meeting and a poor-performing coworker (i.e., situations to which many employees can relate yet may have difficulty addressing) were perceived as the most effective in changing these situations for the better, all while maintaining their likability in the process. Further, perceptions of the communicator’s authenticity and intent helped to explain some of the relationship between the civility and candor combination used and the communicator’s likability and effectiveness. By utilizing both civility and candor to address workplace issues, the results suggest that employees can be seen as both true to themselves and concerned about the feelings of others, increasing the likelihood for positive change and positive work relationships.

At a more global or psychological climate level, a highly honest and respectful communication style continued to prevail when psychological safety was high. In addition to the continued benefits experienced by communicators (i.e., being seen as authentic, well-intentioned, likable, and effective), employees who perceived high levels of civility and candor from their coworkers also benefited such that they felt less lonely at work and were less likely to feel the need to fake emotions with their coworkers. Therefore, it is not only experiences of civility and candor but also psychological climate perceptions of civility and candor that appear to have an important impact on the appraisals employees make and the outcomes they experience at work. Thus, addressing the overarching question of civility and candor’s compatibility, my research emphasizes that resolving the tension between civility and candor is likely to be a necessity for workgroups aiming to increase communication effectiveness and employee well-being. In other words, studying perceptions of civility and candor in isolation is likely to mask important variations in their impact because to be lacking in one component of civil and candid communication means to lose out on the full benefits of the other.
Theoretical and Conceptual Implications

Overall, my research contributes to a better understanding of the tension between civility and candor at work. My research also builds upon a number of interdisciplinary theories and frameworks to help explain why those on the receiving end of this tension play such a crucial role. Importantly, my findings provide some support for both the theory of conflict expression (Weingart et al., 2015) and the Radical Candor approach to feedback (Scott, 2017), two of the frameworks I utilized to explore the tension between civility and candor. First, my results provided support for the relationship between civility and candor akin to both approaches’ strongest predictions: that a highly direct, low intensity approach to conflict (Weingart et al., 2015) or, alternatively, a highly direct, highly caring approach to feedback (Scott, 2017) results in the most positive appraisals and workplace outcomes and that other patterns are likely to be less successful. This was true both in the context of situation-based first impressions and at a psychological climate level in the context of pre-existing work relationships in the current studies. Second, consistent with both approaches, my research showed that civility and candor uniquely operate in a multidimensional space, a possibility that may generally be overlooked due to the theoretical underpinnings of the workplace mistreatment literature regarding “saving face” (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Goffman, 1959). Together, these findings suggest the various advantages that future collaborations between the workplace mistreatment literature and other related disciplines, like organizational conflict, can bring as we continue to build on our understanding of the relationship between civility and candor.

Further, my research suggests a number of implications for the supposed civility and candor “tradeoff.” First and foremost, my research shows the idea that civility and candor are tradeoffs may be somewhat of a false dichotomy if both civility and candor are utilized to
thoughtfully communicate. Importantly, it appears that perceptions that communicators have utilized less of one than the other, or neither, instead of both in unison has negative implications given that, together, civility and candor appear to bring something unique to the table that neither can do in isolation. On the one hand, an argument for those tired of “superficial” civility has been that blunt communication styles are needed to get one’s point across and out in the open. On the other hand, an argument for those tired of “blunt” and rude candor has been that civility is needed to avoid bad-mannered and destructive discourse. However, my research suggests that both those who are concerned with masking the “truth” and, thus, communicate bluntly as well as those who fear disrupting social harmony and, thus, exercise too much caution by being overly civil risk being seen as less authentic, less well-intentioned, less likable, and less effective and risk encouraging less well-being and less camaraderie among their coworkers. In the context of a tradeoff, the term “restraint” (e.g., Gill & Sypher, 2009; Lane & McCourt, 2013) seems to denote that reducing one’s candor quantitatively is an essential goal for achieving civility when this may not be the case. Instead, by relaxing some of the assumptions entailed by a tradeoff distinction, the relationship between civility and candor can also be discussed qualitatively by emphasizing that effective and likable candor is respectful candor and that effective and likable civility is candid civility. Thus, in moving forward with conceptual and theoretical development on civility and candor, it is important to focus not only on quantitative distinctions but also on qualitative distinctions and what this looks like more concretely.

Along these lines, my research also contributes meaningfully to the discussion surrounding the “dark side” of civility and candor (e.g., Harschcovic, 2012). Consistent with recent calls from scholars suggesting that the impact of civility and candor may not be as black and white as it initially seems (Cortina et al., 2017; Harschcovic, 2012; Jamieson et al., 2017;
Miner et al., 2018), my research demonstrates that civility and candor are neither “all good” nor “all bad.” As my findings show, a high candor/low civility or low candor/high civility approach to workplace communication only goes so far. For example, the results of Study 1 showed that neither the high candor/low civility approach nor the low candor/high civility approach reached levels that could be considered highly authentic, well-intentioned, likable or effective. Additionally, Study 2 showed that a low candor/high civility approach was not much better than a low candor/low civility approach on a number of outcomes, with the exception being that a low candor/high civility approach may make coworkers appear slightly more well-intentioned and likable.

Notably, if any combination were to receive a “dark side” distinction, it would be low candor/low civility, which had some of the poorest outcomes across the different combinations. In both studies, coworkers who utilized low candor/low civility communication styles were consistently perceived as the least authentic, least well-intentioned, least likable, and least effective. Further, those on the receiving end of this communication style were lonelier and engaged in more surface acting in Study 2. Thus, the low candor/low civility combination from Study 1 and the low candor/low civility profile from Study 2 reveal a “dark side” to perceiving neither civility nor candor in one’s workgroup. Interestingly, the current research did not reveal any “dark sides” to a high candor/high civility communication style, reinforcing its positive potential. However, it should still be noted that for such a pattern to exist as a global assessment, the results of Study 2 suggest that it must occur with psychological safety, and psychological safety is something that must be built over time (Edmondson, 1999).

My findings may also contribute to an understanding of why the benefits of these different combinations of civility and candor may be in the eye of the beholder. For example, the
current research demonstrated that perceptions of civility and candor were likely to be high when psychological safety was also high. Moreover, Study 2 showed that those belonging to a high psychological safety, high candor, high civility profile were the least likely to feel lonely at work. Thus, at least at a preliminary level, it appears that respectful candor is a benefit that is more likely to be enjoyed by those on the inside, suggesting a potential connection between one’s in-group versus out-group membership via psychological safety and the levels of civility and candor one perceives from coworkers.

Notably, the idea that other combinations of civility and candor, such as high candor/low civility or low candor/high civility, might also have the potential to be perceived as highly authentic and well intentioned in the context of pre-existing work relationships was not supported by my findings. Specifically, the high candor/high civility profile was the only combination to emerge with high psychological safety whereas the other profiles were associated with lower psychological safety. On the surface, this finding may initially contrast with Miner et al.’s (2018) recent discussion of “functional” incivility, which suggests that certain “uncivil” behaviors (e.g., sarcasm, trash-talking) may signal group membership and be viewed positively by in-group members. However, if explored further, one might conclude that what Miner and colleagues (2018) refer to as “functional” incivility actually falls under the high candor/high civility communication style in the current framework. In other words, those who engage in “functional” incivility (i.e., in-group members) may read their own communication style as highly honest and respectful whereas out-group members may perceive it as something else.

Data from intact workgroups is needed to explore these subtle distinctions further. Future research using social network analyses could help to make these distinctions.
Moreover, my findings also answer ongoing calls to examine whether (in)civility is as low-intensity and ambiguous as its operational definition makes it seem (e.g., Cortina et al., 2017; H ershcovis, 2011; Miner et al., 2011). Although my research certainly does not provide a definitive answer, my findings do suggest variations in perceptions of authenticity and intent depending on which combination of civility and candor was used. Across both studies, I found that those who observed or experienced high candor/high civility communication styles from coworkers viewed those coworkers as highly and unambiguously well-intentioned (i.e., constructive, helpful, well-meaning). In contrast, those who observed or experienced high candor/low civility, low candor/high civility, or low candor/low civility communication styles from coworkers viewed those coworkers as less well-intentioned (and less authentic). Notably, perceptions of these communication styles, on average, hovered somewhat below or at the midpoint of the intent scale, suggesting that while these styles were clearly less constructive and helpful than a high candor/high civility approach, none appeared to unambiguously reach the territory of “manipulative” or “hostile.”

Additionally, given the differences in appraisals and outcomes between a high candor/high civility and a low candor/high civility communication style, my results suggest that some of the ambiguous intent associated with civility may be directly influenced by the corresponding level of candor utilized in workplace interactions. Vice versa, given the differences in appraisals and outcomes between a high candor/high civility and a high candor/low civility communication style, my results suggest that the perceived intent associated with high levels of candor may be directly influenced by the corresponding level of civility. Thus, my results point to some important nuances regarding the ambiguity and intent of workplace (in)civility and candor, helping to expand knowledge in this domain.
Practical Implications

At a practical level, my findings also provide valuable insights for employees, workgroups, and organizations. Extending Porath and Gerbasi’s (2015) and Porath et al.’s (2015) assertion that it pays to be civil at work, the current research indicates that it also pays to be candid when that honesty is paired with respect. In fact, my findings suggest that some of the frustrations and miscommunications employees experience at work may stem directly from the use of communications styles that do not properly integrate civility and candor. At an individual level, employees may need to be more conscious about how their communication styles are being perceived by coworkers given the importance of the perceiver’s perspective in shaping the outcomes of work exchanges. As the results of the current research show, it is entirely possible for employees to remain authentic to themselves while simultaneously being respectful of others if they are willing to adopt a high candor/high civility communication style. In fact, employees who do so are much more likely to be effective in their messages and to encourage more genuine exchanges and relationships within their workgroup. In other words, a highly candid, highly civil communication style can bring benefits to both communicators and receivers. At a workgroup and organizational level, managers and leaders may need to improve their ability to proactively recognize the beginnings of less fruitful communication strategies among employees because awareness of these problematic strategies is likely a first step. Recognizing these signs early may help calibrate coworkers to how they are being perceived as well as how they are reacting, which can help get everyone on the same page regarding civility and candor. Because the tension between civility and candor is so clearly perceptual and relational, my findings suggest that a shared sense of psychological safety is likely to be a great equalizer here.

Additionally, my research shows that the communication styles coworkers use to
converse with one another have implications for employees’ well-being at work. Specifically, my research shows that working in an environment that fails to prioritize both civility and candor can be detrimental for employees, increasing the need to surface act and increasing feelings of loneliness. Notably, research suggests that if left unaddressed, surface acting can lead to both emotionally exhausted employees and job performance detriments (Ozcelik, 2013; Wallace, Edwards, Shull, & Finch, 2009). Further, recent research shows that workplace loneliness also contributes to reduced performance (Ozcelik & Barsade, 2018) and that people who experience less belonging and more loneliness tend to report higher depressive symptoms (Hagerty & Williams, 1999; Nolen-Hoeksema & Ahrens, 2002). Thus, workgroups and organizations may need to pay closer attention to how communication dynamics associated with civility and candor shape the well-being of their workers as these dynamics have the potential to lead to longer-term health and performance consequences. Tied to this need, it is interesting to note that, despite the small size of the profiles, employees belonging to the low candor/high civility profile and the low candor/low civility profile clearly had poorer coworker perceptions and poorer well-being than employees belonging to the more beneficial high candor/high civility profiles. Notably, these perceptions existed at the psychological climate level, suggesting that how employees in these profiles feel about their coworkers is likely to influence their perceptions of the coworker interactions that they have in the future. Thus, workgroups that allow civility to take precedence over candor or that fail to promote either may run the risk of operating at less than full capacity because there is the potential for these profiles to continue leading to reduced employee well-being over time.

Importantly, both the respect we show others as well as the candor with which we convey our thoughts are both malleable behaviors that can be shaped through training. Therefore, the
results of this research also have a number of practical implications for organizations looking to build more respectful and candid workplaces through the implementation of civility training interventions or Radical Candor. Although civility training interventions are certainly aimed at encouraging positive interpersonal interactions and relationships (Leiter et al., 2011), there is still a general lack of research assessing whether civility training, as it currently stands, is effective in reaching its goals (Walsh & Magley, 2018). Thus, my findings provide some insights for improving future civility interventions, demonstrating that these interventions might miss their mark if they fail to also consider candor. This is evident in my findings that communicators who used styles high in civility but low in candor, while somewhat likeable, failed to be seen as effective in addressing the issues or situations that they wanted to improve. Because both civility and candor appear to uniquely impact perceptions of authenticity and intent, civility interventions that teach employees to begin by assuming good intent (e.g., Graham et al., 2013; Walsh & Magley, 2013) may also find it helpful to simultaneously educate trainees on the role of authenticity from the perspective of both communicators and perceivers. Assigning value to both authenticity and intent may not only help employees in providing the benefit of the doubt to others (Edmondson, 2004; Neuman & Baron, 2005) but may also help to reduce cynicism about the training from those wary of insincere civility. Thus, because civility and candor are both necessary for building productive communication and positive workplace relationships, researchers and practitioners may find it fruitful to consider reframing or reemphasizing the message of respectful workplace initiatives to be more about how to best communicate constructively with our coworkers through both civility and candor.

Moreover, my research also provides insight for organizations looking to implement an approach like Radical Candor. Although the current research did not necessarily examine the
exact dimensions purported by Scott (2017), their close alignment suggests that helpful conclusions might still be drawn. First, my research suggests that caution may be necessary when implementing an approach like Radical Candor in one’s organization or workgroup. Although both of my studies suggest that a high candor/high civility approach (i.e., challenge directly/care personally in the Radical Candor framework) has a number of advantages for employees and coworkers, an important caveat to consider is that a high candor/high civility communication style may not exist at a more global level without a high level of psychological safety. In other words, I found that when employees did not have high levels of psychological safety, they tended to report lower levels of civility and candor from their coworkers. Thus, Radical Candor is not likely an approach that can be implemented haphazardly as an immediate “cure-all” to organizational communication problems. Organizations that fail to take psychological safety into account risk accidentally encouraging more negative communication styles among employees that have the potential to become “contagious” (e.g., Foulk, Woolum, & Erez, 2016).

Second, my findings emphasize the need for a Radical Candor approach to be a give and take process. Although my studies focused on the perceptions of those on the receiving end of civility and candor, it is important to acknowledge that the relational nature of workplace communication ensures that employees are simultaneously both communicators and receivers. This issue is acknowledged by Scott (2017) who emphasizes that Radical Candor is an approach of both giving and getting feedback. In other words, a person cannot expect to be civilly candid with others yet react with hurt feelings when others respond to them with a similar high candor/high civility communication style. Thus, employees, workgroups, and organizations navigating the tension between civility and candor should not only emphasize the value of civil and candid expression but should also emphasize the value of active listening that is responsive
to civil candor.

**Strengths and Limitations**

The current research had a number of strengths. A major strength of this research is that it approached the relationship between civility and candor and the ways in which people react to different combinations of civility and candor using a variety of strategies across two separate studies. First, this research was able to examine the tension between civility and candor from both a situation-based (i.e., first impressions) perspective in Study 1 and a psychological climate-based (i.e., pre-existing history) perspective in Study 2, enabling a better understanding of how perceptions of civility and candor may differ depending on one’s relationship with the communicator(s). Second, this research was able to approach the tension between civility and candor using both a variable-centered approach (Study 1) and a person-centered approach (Study 2), enabling a better understanding of how civility and candor may operate both at an overall level as well as how civility and candor may operate differently across various subgroups of employees. Lastly, this research was able to approach the tension between civility and candor using two different methods: an experimental vignette study (Study 1) and a survey study (Study 2). In particular, both studies provided unique contributions and suggested important nuances while also providing a common takeaway about the workgroup and employee benefits of high candor/high civility communication strategies, strengthening confidence in the findings and adding a depth to the exploration of this topic that only a single perspective, approach, or method could not.

Another strength of the current research is that Study 2 was conducted using a diverse sample of employees working in a variety of occupations. The use of a diverse sample suggests that the profiles found may better generalize to the larger workforce and can provide a guiding
framework for future studies. Unfortunately, I was unable to test for replication of the Study 2 profile structure in a third study given the sample size demands of latent profile analysis techniques. Due to the exploratory nature of the research questions, however, I believe this preliminary profile solution provides an important starting point for research that has only begun to tap the surface of the relationship between civility and candor and its consequences for employees, workgroups, and organizations. Regardless, because replication is an important next step of latent profile analysis (Meyer & Morin, 2016), future research that aims to replicate the profile solution from Study 2 would be beneficial for further enhancing generalizability.

Moreover, given its potential to add theoretical value, a replication study would also be beneficial in determining whether the low psychological safety, high candor, low civility profile that emerged in the six-profile solution, albeit with extremely small membership, might exist in other samples. It may be the case that a high candor/low civility combination is an approach that better distinguishes between individuals (e.g., the “blunt” jerk) than workgroups. Additionally, the Study 2 sample as a whole was fairly positive, suggesting that the membership size of each profile may differ in specific sectors or within a single organization or industry that has strong communication norms around civility and candor. For example, membership in the low candor/low civility profile or even the high candor/low civility profile found in the six-profile solution might theoretically be larger in a healthcare or nursing sample where bullying and incivility have been an issue (e.g., Rowe & Sherlock, 2005). Future research should explore this possibility.

Importantly, the findings of this research are not meant to convey that there are never situations in which the best action is to forsake civility for candor or candor for civility or that this “functional” combination never leads to hurt feelings. Rather, taken together, the findings

suggest there are generally more effective and less effective ways for integrating candor and civility and that these different strategies have consequences for perceptions of authenticity and intent and outcomes for employees in the work environment.

The current research also had some limitations. One limitation is that both studies were conducted using single time points such that appraisals and outcomes were measured simultaneously via self-report following the experimental manipulation in Study 1 and all variables were measured via a cross-sectional survey in Study 2, raising potential concerns about common method variance. Notably, the cross-sectional design of Study 2 also limits the ability to determine the true directionality of the relationships between the communication profiles and the outcomes of interest. However, because Study 1 utilized an experimental design and Study 2 utilized a survey design while still reaching similar conclusions, this increases confidence in the directionality of the examined relationships and that the relationships found were not simply due to common method variance.

A second limitation is that the appraisal scales and the candor scale used in both studies were self-developed and, thus, have not been previously validated. However, to the best of my knowledge, no appropriate, validated scales exist to measure these constructs as operationalized in the current research. This was especially true for a measure of candor. Consequently, the use of self-developed scales was necessary to assess these constructs of interest. Importantly, the final selection of items in each scale was guided by theory and previous scholarly work. Further, all three scales demonstrated high reliability across both the Study 1 and Study 2 samples. Regardless, these scales could benefit from further empirical scrutiny in future work given their potential theoretical and practical importance. Because Study 1 indicated that situation might also play a role in shaping perceptions of civility and candor, the scales could also potentially
benefit from further contextualization so as to determine whether a high candor/high civility combination continues to be the most beneficial approach across a number of different workplace communication circumstances.

**Directions for Future Research**

Given that the tension between civility and candor in the workplace has been discussed largely anecdotally before these studies, this research area is ripe for further exploration that could benefit both theory and practice. One critical area for future research is to examine how different parties may uniquely contribute to the tension or lack of tension between civility and candor. It is important to note that my studies each focused on a single point of view: the observer of a workplace communication exchange (Study 1) and the target/receiver of general workgroup communication from coworkers (Study 2). However, there is also value in exploring the sender’s perspective to further our understanding of civility and candor’s compatibility. Because communication is heavily relational in nature (e.g., Bohman & Richardson, 2009; Weingart et al., 2015), examining additional points of view simultaneously may be important for getting a fuller picture of when civility and candor are likely to operate harmoniously and when they are likely to be in conflict. In particular, mismatches in perceptions of civility and candor between senders, receivers, and observers may contribute to more negative appraisals and outcomes on all sides due to a potential misunderstanding of intentions. For example, it would be interesting to explore the consequences should all parties agree that an exchange was highly candid but disagree regarding the amount of respect instilled in the message. Alternatively, some level of agreement between all parties regarding the civility and candidness of the exchange may encourage more positive outcomes for everyone involved, both relationally and in terms of communication effectiveness. A dyadic or social network analysis approach could be useful in
this regard in an effort to triangulate sender, receiver, and observer perceptions to more fully illuminate the consequences of different combinations of civility and candor.

Additionally, dyadic or social network designs could tap into certain topics of interest in more detail, such as the impact of “cordial hypocrisy” in workgroups (Solomon & Flores, 2003). For example, beyond receivers’ perceptions, it might be important to consider whether senders themselves are using a communication style that is preferred, one that they feel pressured into by workgroup norms, or one that they know is directly contrary to those norms. In particular, using a combination of civility and candor that is not preferred could lead to surface acting on the communicator’s part that could alter others’ perceptions of their authenticity and intentions, creating a cycle of emotional labor among colleagues. In other words, civility and candor at work may involve a give and take process that can become unbalanced in one direction or the other should such topics not be approached with care.

Further, a multi-level perspective may also be useful for understanding whether perceptions about the tension between civility and candor tend to be shared by those belonging to the same workgroup. Notably, a multi-level perspective raises the question of whether “true” civility and “true” candor require high levels of agreement among coworkers for workgroups to fully reap their benefits. In this respect, researchers could look to previous work on conflict asymmetry for guidance (e.g., Jehn, Rispens, Thatcher, 2010). Research on conflict asymmetry uses a multi-level approach to examine how a lack of coworker consensus on the level of conflict in their workgroup influences both group-level and individual-level outcomes, showing that employees in the same workgroup can often have very different perceptions of conflict (Jehn et al., 2010). Applying this idea to civility and candor, future work could explore how a lack of consensus regarding the level of civility and candor in a workgroup impacts the appraisals,
communication effectiveness, and well-being of employees. It may be the case that a lack of consensus on civility, candor, or both could lead to disparate perceptions of authenticity and intentions among coworkers, limiting the ability for a high candor/high civility norm to develop organically and benefit workers.

Beyond these considerations, it is also important for future research to continue examining the role of individual differences in shaping employees’ appraisals of civility and candor. The current research considered the role of feedback seeking behavior and core self-evaluations in shaping employees’ perceptions; however, other factors such as hostile attribution bias and negative reciprocity beliefs may also shape how authentic and well-intentioned a person considers their coworkers’ communication. Previous research suggests that those high in hostile attribution bias, or the tendency to assign hostile intentions to others in ambiguous situations (Matthews & Norris, 2002), and negative reciprocity beliefs, or the extent to which people believe in a tit for tat exchange when they feel they have been unfavorably treated (Eisenberger, Lynch, Aselage, & Rohdieck, 2004), are more likely to engage in interpersonal deviance (Wu, Zhang, Chiu, Kwan, & He, 2014). Thus, it may be the case that some individuals are more inclined to see specific levels of civility and candor from their coworkers in a negative light and reciprocate accordingly through their communication with others.

Another area of future research could also explore how civility and candor perceptions play out when the communicator is the supervisor. Notably, the current research only explored civil and candid communication between coworkers. Although we might expect a high civility/high candor approach to still be the most beneficial strategy regardless of source, there is a possibility that appraisals and outcomes of the various civility and candor combinations might look somewhat different depending on whether the source of the civility and candor is a
supervisor or coworkers given the inherent power dynamics in supervisor-subordinate relationships. For example, a low candor/high civility communication style may be particularly problematic when used by a supervisor not only because it can make the supervisor seem less authentic and less well-intentioned, but also because such an approach may fail to notify subordinates of problem areas with their performance in a timely manner. Further, supervisors who use this approach could possibly risk being blamed by their subordinates for continued issues with a problem coworker. Additionally, it could be important to consider whether supervisors use different combinations of civility and candor depending on the subordinate with whom they are interacting and the implications of such practices.

Finally, future research could consider how culture influences the tension between civility and candor. The overwhelming conclusion between both Study 1 and Study 2 was that a high candor/high civility approach to communication had the most positive outcomes for both employees and their coworkers. However, it should be noted that the current research was conducted using a U.S.-based sample and neither study accounted for larger cultural implications when examining which methods of combining civility and candor are likely to be best. Previous research shows that whereas individualistic, Western cultures tend to favor direct methods of confrontation and communication, collectivistic, Eastern cultures tend to favor more indirect approaches that maintain social harmony (Brett, Behfar, & Sanchez-Burks, 2014). Thus, the most beneficial methods of combining civility and candor as well as how employees appraise and respond to these different combinations may vary across cultures. Future research should explore this possibility given the increasing prevalence of cross-cultural teams.

Conclusion

Civility and candor are very intuitive concepts with which many people are familiar.
However, rarely do we think about what exactly leads us to see others as civil versus uncivil or candid versus uncandid, especially when these two concepts are in conflict. Yet, it is clear that these perceptions have important implications given the rise of public and workplace discourse either promoting the pros or bemoaning the cons of civility and candor: “Political correctness, thin-skinned coworkers, and fear of litigation have made it difficult to be direct and candid with people without crossing some sort of line. To make matter’s worse, the line’s a moving target” (Tobak, 2011, para. 1). In contrast to such sentiments, the current research emphasizes that when people choose to prioritize civility and candor, employees and their workgroups can enjoy the best of both worlds. “The reality is, we can tell the truth without being uncivil” (Hershcovis, 2012, para. 4), and “it is entirely possible to express opinions without hurting people” (Gardner, 2004, para. 17). Although employees working in close proximity are bound to have conflict and communication issues around civility and candor, this research shows that how these issues are expressed can make all the difference.
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## Tables

### Table 1
*Means, Standard Deviations, and Inter-Construct Correlations for Study 1 Scenario 1*

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<td>.51**</td>
<td>.78**</td>
<td>.95</td>
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<td>6. Communication effectiveness</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>.38**</td>
<td>.62**</td>
<td>.65**</td>
<td>.58**</td>
<td>.58**</td>
<td>.88</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Cronbach alpha internal consistency reliability estimates are presented along the diagonal.

*p < .05, **p < .01*
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<tr>
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<td>4. Appraisals of intent</td>
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<td>5. Liking</td>
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<td>6. Communication effectiveness</td>
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<td>1.64</td>
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</table>

*Note. Cronbach alpha internal consistency reliability estimates are presented along the diagonal.

*p < .05, **p < .01
### Table 3

**Scenario 1 Coefficient Estimates for Mediation Analyses Predicting Liking and Effectiveness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario 1</th>
<th>Authenticity ( R^2 = .37 )</th>
<th>Intent ( R^2 = .54 )</th>
<th>Liking ( R^2 = .63 )</th>
<th>Effectiveness ( R^2 = .54 )</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( b )</td>
<td>( SE )</td>
<td>( b )</td>
<td>( SE )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Candor/High Civility (Constant)</td>
<td>5.67**</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>5.62**</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Candor/Low Civility (( D_1 ))</td>
<td>-1.40**</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>-2.33**</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Candor/High Civility (( D_2 ))</td>
<td>-2.51**</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>-1.44**</td>
<td>.18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low Candor/Low Civility (( D_3 ))</td>
<td>-2.16**</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>-2.49**</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appraisals of authenticity (( M_1 ))</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appraisals of intent (( M_2 ))</td>
<td>.17**</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.39**</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( D_1 ) via authenticity</td>
<td>-.23*</td>
<td>[-.43, -.06]</td>
<td>-.54*</td>
<td>[-.86, -.28]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( D_2 ) via authenticity</td>
<td>-.42*</td>
<td>[-.71, -.11]</td>
<td>-.96*</td>
<td>[-1.39, -.56]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( D_3 ) via authenticity</td>
<td>-.36*</td>
<td>[-.65, -.09]</td>
<td>-.84*</td>
<td>[-1.30, -.45]</td>
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<tr>
<td>( D_1 ) via intent</td>
<td>-1.71*</td>
<td>[-2.20, -1.27]</td>
<td>-.68*</td>
<td>[-1.18, -.16]</td>
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<tr>
<td>( D_2 ) via intent</td>
<td>-1.06*</td>
<td>[-1.42, -.74]</td>
<td>-.42*</td>
<td>[-.74, -.10]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( D_3 ) via intent</td>
<td>-1.83*</td>
<td>[-2.34, -1.37]</td>
<td>-.73*</td>
<td>[-1.25, -.18]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Values presented are unstandardized regression coefficients. Models for liking and effectiveness were tested separately.

\(*p < .05, **p < .01\)
Table 4
Scenario 2 Coefficient Estimates for Mediation Analyses Predicting Liking and Effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario 2</th>
<th>Authenticity $R^2 = .44$</th>
<th>Intent $R^2 = .41$</th>
<th>Liking $R^2 = .45$</th>
<th>Effectiveness $R^2 = .49$</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>$b$</td>
<td>$SE$</td>
<td>$b$</td>
<td>$SE$</td>
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<tr>
<td>High Candor/High Civility (Constant)</td>
<td>5.71**</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>5.58**</td>
<td>.13</td>
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<tr>
<td>High Candor/Low Civility ($D_1$)</td>
<td>-.87**</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>-1.72**</td>
<td>.19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low Candor/High Civility ($D_2$)</td>
<td>-2.53**</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>-1.24**</td>
<td>.19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low Candor/Low Civility ($D_3$)</td>
<td>-2.53**</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>-2.12**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appraisals of authenticity ($M_1$)</td>
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<td>.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appraisals of intent ($M_2$)</td>
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<td>.56**</td>
<td>.08</td>
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<tr>
<td>$D_1$ via authenticity</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>[-.21, .03]</td>
<td>-.16*</td>
<td>[-.35, -.03]</td>
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<tr>
<td>$D_2$ via authenticity</td>
<td>-.25</td>
<td>[-.58, .09]</td>
<td>-.48*</td>
<td>[-.94, -.08]</td>
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<tr>
<td>$D_1$ via authenticity</td>
<td>-.25</td>
<td>[-.58, .09]</td>
<td>-.48*</td>
<td>[-.94, -.08]</td>
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<tr>
<td>$D_1$ via intent</td>
<td>-1.18*</td>
<td>[-1.66, -.78]</td>
<td>-1.63*</td>
<td>[-1.09, -.21]</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Values presented are unstandardized regression coefficients. Models for liking and effectiveness were tested separately.*

*p < .05, **p < .01
### Hypothetical Profiles of Civility, Candor, and Psychological Safety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Psychological Safety</th>
<th>Civility</th>
<th>Candor</th>
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<td>High / Moderate</td>
<td>High / Moderate</td>
<td>High / Moderate</td>
</tr>
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<td>Low</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>High / Moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High / Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High / Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>High / Moderate</td>
<td>High / Moderate</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Low</td>
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Table 6
Means, Standard Deviations, and Inter-Construct Correlations for Study 2

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<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
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<td>9. Surface acting</td>
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<td>-.41**</td>
<td>-.54**</td>
<td>-.62**</td>
<td>-.51**</td>
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<td>.67**</td>
<td>.95</td>
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<td>.007</td>
<td>-.04</td>
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<td>.08*</td>
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<td>11. Feedback seeking behavior</td>
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<td>.15**</td>
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<td>.07</td>
<td>.22**</td>
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<td>12. Core self-evaluations</td>
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<td>.49**</td>
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<td>.43**</td>
<td>.46**</td>
<td>.37**</td>
<td>.31**</td>
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<td>-.51**</td>
<td>-.17**</td>
<td>.03</td>
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*Note. Cronbach alpha internal consistency reliability estimates are presented along the diagonal.
*p < .05, **p < .01
### Table 7

**Latent Profile Fit Statistics for Study 2**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>No. of profiles</th>
<th>LL</th>
<th>FP</th>
<th>AIC</th>
<th>BIC</th>
<th>SABIC</th>
<th>LMR (p)</th>
<th>BLRT (p)</th>
<th>Entropy</th>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5832.683</td>
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<td>5620.966</td>
<td>5684.275</td>
<td>5639.823</td>
<td>.0046</td>
<td>.0000</td>
<td>.815</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>-2720.444</td>
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<td>5476.888</td>
<td>5558.285</td>
<td>5501.133</td>
<td>.0000</td>
<td>.0000</td>
<td>.796</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td><strong>-2698.465</strong></td>
<td>22</td>
<td><strong>5440.931</strong></td>
<td><strong>5540.417</strong></td>
<td><strong>5470.564</strong></td>
<td><strong>.3033</strong></td>
<td><strong>.0000</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>-2669.201</td>
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<td>5390.402</td>
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<td>5425.423</td>
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<td>.0074</td>
<td>.848</td>
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</table>

*Note. Bold font indicates selected model. LL = log likelihood; FP = number of free parameters; AIC = Akaike Information Criteria; BIC = Bayesian Information Criteria; SABIC = sample-size adjusted BIC; LMR = Lo-Mendell-Rubin adjusted likelihood ratio test; BLRT = parametric bootstrapped likelihood ratio test.*
Table 8

Descriptive Information for Latent Profiles of Workplace Communication in Study 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profiles</th>
<th>% of sample (n)</th>
<th>Psyc. safety</th>
<th>Civility</th>
<th>Candor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>95% CI</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profile 1 (“Low”)</td>
<td>3.7% (25)</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>[2.51, 3.13]</td>
<td>1.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profile 2 (“Low/High”)</td>
<td>2.5% (17)</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>[3.24, 4.78]</td>
<td>5.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profile 3 (“Moderate”)</td>
<td>14.7% (100)</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>[3.84, 4.08]</td>
<td>4.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profile 4 (“High”)</td>
<td>46.2% (314)</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>[4.60, 4.82]</td>
<td>5.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profile 5 (“V. High”)</td>
<td>32.9% (224)</td>
<td>5.62</td>
<td>[5.46, 5.78]</td>
<td>6.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Values for the percent of sample and profile size (n) are based on the most likely class membership. Low = Low Candor/Low Civility, Low/High = Low Candor/High Civility, Moderate = Moderate Candor/Moderate Civility, High = High Candor/High Civility, V. High = Very High Candor/Very High Civility.
### Table 9

**Results for Auxiliary Analyses Using Latent Profile Membership to Predict Study 2 Outcomes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Profile 1 “Low”</th>
<th>Profile 2 “Low/High”</th>
<th>Profile 3 “Moderate”</th>
<th>Profile 4 “High”</th>
<th>Profile 5 “V. High”</th>
<th>Overall $\chi^2(4)$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coworker authenticity</td>
<td>2.46&lt;sub&gt;C,D,E&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>3.24&lt;sub&gt;D,E&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>3.73&lt;sub&gt;A,D,E&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>4.98&lt;sub&gt;A,B,C,E&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>6.33&lt;sub&gt;A,B,C,D&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>6.31.42**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coworker intent</td>
<td>2.49&lt;sub&gt;B,C,D,E&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>3.57&lt;sub&gt;A,D,E&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>4.08&lt;sub&gt;A,D,E&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>5.07&lt;sub&gt;A,B,C,E&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>6.23&lt;sub&gt;A,B,C,D&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>535.64**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coworker likability</td>
<td>3.54&lt;sub&gt;B,C,D,E&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>4.64&lt;sub&gt;A,D,E&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>4.36&lt;sub&gt;A,D,E&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>5.59&lt;sub&gt;A,B,C,E&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>6.57&lt;sub&gt;A,B,C,D&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>398.12**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coworker communication effectiveness</td>
<td>1.85&lt;sub&gt;C,D,E&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>2.68&lt;sub&gt;C,D,E&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>3.57&lt;sub&gt;A,B,D,E&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>4.75&lt;sub&gt;A,B,C,E&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>6.23&lt;sub&gt;A,B,C,D&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>653.63**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loneliness</td>
<td>3.09&lt;sub&gt;D,E&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>2.91&lt;sub&gt;D,E&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>2.85&lt;sub&gt;D,E&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>2.27&lt;sub&gt;A,B,C,E&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>1.75&lt;sub&gt;A,B,C,D&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>240.92**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surface acting</td>
<td>3.57&lt;sub&gt;D,E&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>3.12&lt;sub&gt;E&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>3.19&lt;sub&gt;D,E&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>4.75&lt;sub&gt;A,C,F&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>1.86&lt;sub&gt;A,B,C,D&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>175.26**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep acting</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>2.49&lt;sub&gt;C,D,E&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>3.09&lt;sub&gt;B&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>3.11&lt;sub&gt;B&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>3.10&lt;sub&gt;B&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>5.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Values displayed are means with the exception of the overall chi-square test. Subscripts indicate profiles that significantly differed at $p < .05$. Low = Low Candor/Low Civility, Low/High = Low Candor/High Civility, Moderate = Moderate Candor/Moderate Civility, High = High Candor/High Civility, V. High = Very High Candor/Very High Civility.

$p < .05$, **$p < .01$
Table 10

**Results for Study 2 Multinomial Logistic Regression Analyses Predicting Latent Profile Membership**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Low vs. Low/High</th>
<th>Low vs. Mod.</th>
<th>Low vs. Low</th>
<th>Low vs. V. High</th>
<th>Low/High vs. Mod.</th>
<th>Low/High vs. High</th>
<th>Low/High vs. V. High</th>
<th>Mod. vs. High</th>
<th>Mod. vs. V. High</th>
<th>High vs. V. High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feedback seeking behavior</td>
<td>-0.29</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.66***</td>
<td>-0.002</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core self-evaluations</td>
<td>1.85*</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>1.25*</td>
<td>3.07**</td>
<td>-1.95**</td>
<td>-0.59</td>
<td>1.22*</td>
<td>1.36**</td>
<td>3.17**</td>
<td>1.82**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (0 = male, 1 = female)</td>
<td>-1.72</td>
<td>-1.32*</td>
<td>-0.88</td>
<td>-1.07</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race (0 = White, 1 = minority)</td>
<td>-2.80</td>
<td>-0.59</td>
<td>-0.28</td>
<td>-0.59</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender comp. (mostly women)</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>-0.87</td>
<td>-0.99</td>
<td>-0.49</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender comp. (equal ratio)</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>-0.35</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>-0.26</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.80*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial comp. (different race/eth.)</td>
<td>-16.52**</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>19.11**</td>
<td>18.89**</td>
<td>18.24**</td>
<td>-0.23</td>
<td>-0.87</td>
<td>-0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial comp. (diverse)</td>
<td>2.18*</td>
<td>1.57*</td>
<td>1.38*</td>
<td>1.65*</td>
<td>-0.61</td>
<td>-0.80</td>
<td>-0.52</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The feedback seeking behavior and core self-evaluation analyses were conducted with 670 participants and the gender and race analyses were conducted with 672 participants because the R3STEP approach in Mplus uses listwise deletion. For the gender, race, gender composition, and racial/ethnic composition dummy code predictors, “male,” “White,” “mostly men,” and “mostly the same race/ethnicity as me” were used as the reference groups, respectively. For each column, the profile listed first was considered the reference group. Low = Low Candor/Low Civility, Low/High = Low Candor/High Civility, Mod. = Moderate Candor/Moderate Civility, High = High Candor/High Civility, V. High = Very High Candor/Very High Civility. *p < .05, **p < .01.
**Figure 1.** Conceptual model for Study 1.

- **Combinations**
  - High candor / low civility
  - High candor / high civility
  - Low candor / low civility
  - Low candor / high civility

- **H1(a)**
- **H1(b)**
- **H2**
- **H3(a)**
- **H3(b)**
- **H4**
- **H5(a)**
- **H5(b)**

**Communicator Likability**

**Communicator Effectiveness**
Figure 2. Study 2 latent profiles combining psychological safety, civility, and candor.
Figure 3. Standardized means of Study 2 outcomes across the different latent profiles. **Note:** The results were standardized to aid in interpretation.
Appendix A

Scenario 1: “Pointless” Meeting

**High Candor/High Civility**
Imagine that you are sitting in a work meeting. The meeting facilitator, your coworker Andrew, is leading it ineffectively, and there seems to be no clear objective. You see your coworker, Michael/Michelle, raise up his/her hand and say: “With all due respect, I am having a hard time understanding the goal of the meeting. Would you mind if we discuss a few suggestions to help make it more productive?”

**High Candor/Low Civility**
Imagine that you are sitting in a work meeting. The meeting facilitator, your coworker Andrew, is leading it ineffectively, and there seems to be no clear objective. You see your coworker, Michael/Michelle, raise up his/her hand, sigh audibly, and say: “excuse me, but is there even a point to this meeting?”

**Low Candor/High Civility**
Imagine that you are sitting in a work meeting. The meeting facilitator, your coworker Andrew, is leading it ineffectively, and there seems to be no clear objective. Yet everyone, including your coworker Michael/Michelle, sits quietly and says nothing to change the direction of the meeting.

**Low Candor/Low Civility**
Imagine that you are sitting in a work meeting. The meeting facilitator, your coworker Andrew, is leading it ineffectively, and there seems to be no clear objective. Yet everyone, including your coworker Michael/Michelle, sits quietly and says nothing to change the direction of the meeting. Later after the meeting, you overhear Michael/Michelle say to the person sitting next to him/her: “That meeting was an utter waste of my time.”
Scenario 2: Poor-Performing Coworker

**High Candor/High Civility**
Imagine that you are talking with your coworkers, including your coworker Andrew, who tends to be unreliable. Andrew starts complaining about his lower than average pay and how unfairly treated he feels. In response your coworker, Michael/Michelle, says: "I'm not sure if you're aware of this, but I've noticed that you are taking 2-hour breaks every day and calling in sick every second Friday. This can often leave our team hanging. If you work on addressing this concern, I think you will get a better response when you ask for a raise next time."

**High Candor/Low Civility**
Imagine that you are talking with your coworkers, including your coworker Andrew, who tends to be unreliable. Andrew starts complaining about his lower than average pay and how unfairly treated he feels. In response, your coworker, Michael/Michelle, sighs audibly and says: “But you take 2-hour breaks every day and you call in sick every second Friday! Why in the world do you think you deserve a raise?”

**Low Candor/High Civility**
Imagine that you are talking with your coworkers, including your coworker Andrew, who tends to be unreliable. Andrew starts complaining about his lower than average pay and how unfairly treated he feels. He is known for taking 2-hour breaks every day and calling in sick every second Friday. However, everyone, including your coworker Michael/Michelle, nods their heads sympathetically and validates his complaints.

**Low Candor/Low Civility**
Imagine that you are talking with your coworkers, including your coworker Andrew, who tends to be unreliable. Andrew starts complaining about his lower than average pay and how unfairly treated he feels. Everyone, including your coworker Michael/Michelle, nods their heads sympathetically and validates his complaints. Later, you overhear your coworker, Michael/Michelle, say to the person sitting next to him/her: “Andrew takes 2-hour breaks every day and calls in sick every second Friday! Why in the world does she think she deserve a raise?”
Appendix B

**Study 1 Measures**

**Civility**
1 = Strongly disagree  
2 = Disagree  
3 = Somewhat disagree  
4 = Neither disagree nor agree  
5 = Somewhat agree  
6 = Agree  
7 = Strongly agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructions: Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Michael/Michelle treated Andrew with respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Michael/Michelle treated Andrew with dignity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Michael/Michelle treated Andrew politely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Michael/Michelle was pleasant to Andrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Michael/Michelle treated Andrew in a caring manner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Michael/Michelle was considerate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Candor**
1 = Strongly disagree  
2 = Disagree  
3 = Somewhat disagree  
4 = Neither disagree nor agree  
5 = Somewhat agree  
6 = Agree  
7 = Strongly agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructions: Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Michael/Michelle expressed his/her views directly to Andrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Michael/Michelle was straightforward in his/her communication to Andrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Michael/Michelle was honest with Andrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Michael/Michelle was candid about his/her viewpoints or feelings with Andrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Michael/Michelle was frank with Andrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Michael/Michelle communicated openly to Andrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Michael/Michelle said exactly what he/she meant to Andrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Michael/Michelle was open about expressing his/her thoughts and ideas to Andrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Michael/Michelle expressed his/her opinions candidly to Andrew</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Appraisals of Authenticity**
1 = Strongly disagree  
2 = Disagree
3 = Somewhat disagree
4 = Neither disagree nor agree
5 = Somewhat agree
6 = Agree
7 = Strongly agree

Instructions: Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following descriptions.

Michael/Michelle’s comments and/or actions were...

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Authentic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Genuine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sincere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Phony</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appraisals of Intent
1 = Strongly disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Somewhat disagree
4 = Neither disagree nor agree
5 = Somewhat agree
6 = Agree
7 = Strongly agree

Instructions: Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following descriptions.

Michael/Michelle’s comments and/or actions were...

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Constructive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Helpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Well-meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Self-centered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Manipulative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Harmful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Hostile</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Liking
1 = Strongly disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Somewhat disagree
4 = Neither disagree nor agree
5 = Somewhat agree
6 = Agree
7 = Strongly agree

Instructions: Please rate the extent to which you agree with the following statements…
1. I would like Michael/Michelle
2. I would get along with Michael/Michelle
3. It would be a pleasure to work with Michael/Michelle
4. I think Michael/Michelle would make a good coworker

**Communication Effectiveness**

1 = Strongly disagree  
2 = Disagree  
3 = Somewhat disagree  
4 = Neither disagree nor agree  
5 = Somewhat agree  
6 = Agree  
7 = Strongly agree

Instructions: Please rate the extent to which you agree with the following statements…

1. Michael/Michelle’s comments and/or actions would be effective in changing Andrew’s behavior
2. Michael/Michelle’s comments and/or actions are likely to enhance the performance of the team
Appendix C

Study 2 Measures

Civility
1 = Strongly disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Somewhat disagree
4 = Neither disagree nor agree
5 = Somewhat agree
6 = Agree
7 = Strongly agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When communicating, my coworkers...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Treat others with respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Treat others with dignity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Treat others politely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Are pleasant to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Treat others in caring manner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Are considerate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Candor
1 = Strongly disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Somewhat disagree
4 = Neither disagree nor agree
5 = Somewhat agree
6 = Agree
7 = Strongly agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When communicating, my coworkers...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Express their views directly to each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Are straightforward in their communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Are honest with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Are candid about their viewpoints of feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Are frank with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Communicate openly to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Say exactly what they mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Are open about expressing their thoughts and ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Express their opinions candidly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Psychological Safety
1 = Strongly disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Somewhat disagree
4 = Neither disagree nor agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When communicating, my coworkers...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Express their views directly to each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Are straightforward in their communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Are honest with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Are candid about their viewpoints of feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Are frank with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Communicate openly to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Say exactly what they mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Are open about expressing their thoughts and ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Express their opinions candidly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

1. If you make a mistake at work, it is often held against you (r)
2. Employees in my workgroup are able to bring up problems and tough issues
3. Employees in my workgroup sometimes reject others for being different (r)
4. It is safe to take risks within my workgroup
5. Within my workgroup, it is difficult to ask other individuals for help (r)
6. No one in my workgroup would deliberately act in a way that undermines my efforts
7. My unique skills and talents are valued and utilized within my workgroup

**Appraisals of Authenticity**

1 = Strongly disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Somewhat disagree
4 = Neither disagree nor agree
5 = Somewhat agree
6 = Agree
7 = Strongly agree

The next set of questions refers to your coworkers' communication styles that you rated above. The communication styles used by my coworkers are...

1. Authentic
2. Genuine
3. Sincere
4. Phony

**Appraisals of Intent**

1 = Strongly disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Somewhat disagree
4 = Neither disagree nor agree
5 = Somewhat agree
6 = Agree
7 = Strongly agree

The next set of questions refers to your coworkers' communication styles that you rated above. The communication styles used by my coworkers are...

1. Constructive
2. Helpful
3. Well-meaning
4. Self-centered
5. Manipulative
6. Harmful
7. Hostile

**Liking**

1 = Strongly disagree  
2 = Disagree  
3 = Somewhat disagree  
4 = Neither disagree nor agree  
5 = Somewhat agree  
6 = Agree  
7 = Strongly agree

| Please rate the extent to which you agree with the following statements… |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. I like my coworkers  | 2. I get along with my coworkers  |
| 3. It is a pleasure working with my coworkers  | 4. I think the people in my workgroup make good coworkers |

**Communication Effectiveness**

1 = Strongly disagree  
2 = Disagree  
3 = Somewhat disagree  
4 = Neither disagree nor agree  
5 = Somewhat agree  
6 = Agree  
7 = Strongly agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The communication styles used by my coworkers...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Are effective in bringing about change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Loneliness**

1 = Strongly disagree  
2 = Disagree  
3 = Neutral  
4 = Agree  
5 = Strongly agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please rate the degree to which each of the following statements reflect your feelings about your experience in your workgroup.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I feel in tune with my coworkers (r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. There is no one I can turn to in my workgroup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. When I am with coworkers, I feel part of a group of friends (r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I am no longer close to anyone in my workgroup</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. My interests and ideas are not shared by the coworkers around me
9. I am an outgoing person
10. In my workgroup, there are people I feel close to
11. I feel left out in my workgroup
12. My social relationships in my workgroup are superficial
13. No one really knows me well in my workgroup
14. I feel isolated from my coworkers
15. In my workgroup, I can find companionship when I want it
16. There are people who really understand me in my workgroup
17. I am unhappy being so withdrawn in my workgroup
18. People in my workgroup are around me but not with me
19. There are people I can talk to in my workgroup
20. There are people I can turn to in my workgroup

### Surface Acting
1 = Strongly disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neutral
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly agree

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements concerning your job.

1. I put on an act in order to deal with my coworkers in an appropriate way
2. I fake a good mood when interacting with my coworkers
3. I put on a “show” or “performance” when interacting with my coworkers
4. I just pretend to have the emotions I need to display for my job
5. I put on a “mask” in order to display the emotions I need for the job.
6. I show feelings to my coworkers that are different from what I feel inside
7. I fake the emotions I show when dealing with my coworkers

### Deep Acting
1 = Strongly disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neutral
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly agree

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements concerning your job.

1. I try to actually experience the emotions that I must show to my coworkers
2. I make an effort to actually feel the emotions that I need to display toward others
3. I work hard to feel the emotions that I need to show to my coworkers
4. I work at developing the feelings inside of me that I need to show to my coworkers

### Core Self-Evaluations
1 = Strongly disagree
Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

1. I am confident I get the success I deserve in life
2. Sometimes I feel depressed (r)
3. When I try, I generally succeed
4. Sometimes when I fail I feel worthless (r)
5. I complete tasks successfully
6. Sometimes, I do not feel in control of my work (r)
7. Overall, I am satisfied with myself
8. I am filled with doubts about my competence (r)
9. I determine what will happen in my life
10. I do not feel in control of my success in my career (r)
11. I am capable of coping with most of my problems
12. There are times when things look pretty bleak and hopeless to me (r)

Feedback Seeking Behavior
1 = Never
2 = Very rarely
3 = Rarely
4 = Occasionally
5 = Frequently
6 = Very frequently

How frequently do you...
1. Ask for feedback on technical aspects of your job?
2. Ask for feedback on role expectations (e.g., what is expected of you in your job)?
3. Ask for feedback on your social behaviors at work?
4. Seek information from your coworkers about your work performance?
5. Seek information from your supervisor about your work performance?

Workgroup Gender Composition
1 = Mostly men
2 = Mostly women
3 = As many women as men

1. What is the gender composition of your workgroup?

Workgroup Racial/Ethnic Composition
1 = Mostly the same race/ethnicity as me
2 = Mostly a different race/ethnicity than me
3 = A wide variety of races/ethnicities
1. What is the racial/ethnic composition of your workgroup?