

**Employee Perceptions of CEO Ghost Posting and Voice:  
Effects on Perceived Authentic Leadership, Organizational Transparency, and Employee-  
Organization Relationships**

**Tom Kelleher, Ph.D.**

Associate Dean, Division of Graduate Studies and Research  
University of Florida  
[tkell@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:tkell@jou.ufl.edu)

**Rita Linjuan Men, Ph.D., APR**

Associate Professor, Department of Public Relations  
University of Florida  
[rlmen@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:rlmen@jou.ufl.edu)

**Patrick Thelen, Ph.D.**

Assistant Professor  
San Diego State University  
[pthelen@sdsu.edu](mailto:pthelen@sdsu.edu)

***Acknowledgement:** The authors gratefully acknowledge financial support for this study through the Arthur W. Page Center's Page Legacy Grant program.*

### **Abstract**

An online survey of a national sample of employees of mid- to large-size organizations in the U.S. (N=549) was conducted to examine employees' general acceptance of CEO ghost posting practices on social media and to test a conceptual model that links perceptions of CEO ghost posting and perceived CEO voice to perceptions of authentic CEO leadership, organizational transparency, and employee-organization relationships. CEO ghost posting was found to be commonly expected and generally tolerated by employees. However, results of the structural equation model indicate that employee perceptions of CEO voice were found to play a more important role than their beliefs about CEO ghost posting in relation to perceptions of CEO authentic leadership, organizational transparency, and employee-organization relationships. CEO voice on social media and CEO authentic leadership were found to foster organizational transparency, which was shown as a determinant of employee-organization relationships. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

When Bill Gates published and copyrighted his bestseller *Business @ the Speed of Thought*, readers did not protest upon thumbing a few pages in to see that the book was authored "with Collins Hemingway." Likewise for Sheryl Sandberg's *Lean In* (with Nell Scovell) or Howard Schultz's *Onward: How Starbucks Fought for Its Life without Losing Its Soul* (with Joanne Gordon). But what about Gates's tweets, Sandberg's Facebook posts, or Schultz's online messages posted for Starbucks employees? Social media and internal communications are two contexts in which standards for transparency and authenticity may be considerably higher because publics are more likely to expect that the people whose personal voices are presented are indeed the same people responsible for creating the content, engaging the conversation, and extending the organizational identity (Devereux, Melewar, & Foroudi, 2017; Kelleher, 2015; Tsai & Men, 2016).

More than any other individual, a CEO is likely to represent the overall organization's voice in social media, and many CEOs have embraced this role. In 2012, Weber Shandwick surveyed 630 professionals—managers on up to the C-suite, but not including CEOs themselves. That study found that highly social CEOs (defined as those who participate in social media at least once per week) were more likely to write their own posts than the average CEOs who appear on social media less (63% vs. 45%, respectively). The same study found that the most utilized channels for social CEOs to post their messages were Facebook (67% among highly social CEOs), Twitter (51% among highly social CEOs) and Blogs (49% among highly social CEOs). Google+ (39%), LinkedIn (34%), and YouTube (29%) followed.

The purpose of this research is to explore standards of authenticity for CEO social media posting and how they influence employee perceptions and relational outcomes and to draw practical recommendations for strategic and responsible use of digital media in internal public relations. Specifically, this study tested a conceptual model that linked CEO ghost posting on social media and CEO voice to perceived CEO authentic leadership, organizational transparency, and employee-organizational relationships.

## **Literature Review**

### ***CEO Ghost Posting***

Ghost posting refers to “the practice of writing . . . posts on behalf of someone else who is stated as the author, and it can occur with or without disclosure of writing assistance” (Gallicano, Brett, & Hopp, 2013, p. 2). With rising public expectations of organizational and leadership authenticity, scholars have investigated how common and ethical it is for professional communicators to engage in undisclosed organizational ghost posting.

Gallicano et al. (2013) focused exclusively on blogging and found that a large majority of U.S. public relations practitioners who participated in their survey accepted the practice of undisclosed organizational ghost blogging under certain conditions. They examined public relations practitioners’ views of ghost blogging acceptability and found that 71.1% of U.S. public relations practitioners agreed or strongly agreed that undisclosed organizational ghost blogging is acceptable if the content comes from the executive and the executive gives final approval. When practitioners were asked a similar question that did not specify the involvement of the CEO in the content and approval, the results were more divided: 40.9% still believed that disclosure is not necessary while 37.1% believed in the need for disclosure.

Further research with readers of corporate blogs revealed that 57.2% thought it was common for a company to have a blog that listed the president or CEO as the author, even though it was written by someone else (Gallicano, Cho, and Bivins, 2014). However, just because a practice is catalogued as common, does not mean that it is also an effective strategy for cultivating relationships. Levels of approval of ghost blogging as a practice were substantially lower than the levels of expectation for its occurrence. While readers may identify that a practice is taking place, it will not be effective for building lasting relationships if they disapprove it (Gallicano et al., 2014). Furthermore, if stakeholders such as employees disfavor CEO ghost posting, their perceptions of the CEO’s authentic leadership and organizational transparency may decrease.

While Gallicano et al. (2013) provided important evidence on the acceptability of ghost blogging in the public relations profession, little is known about how the organization’s No.1 stakeholder group, employees, perceive executive ghost posting. This study examines CEO ghost posting and its impact on perceived leadership authenticity and employee perceptual and relational outcomes (i.e., perceived organizational transparency, employee-organization relationships). In particular, CEO ghost posting in this study is defined as the practice of communication staff writing social media messages, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, and blogs, on behalf of the CEO of an organization. Given the increasing use of social media among CEOs and the escalated public expectations of transparency and authenticity in the digital era, this study examined particularly CEO ghost posting on social media and its impact on employee perceptions and relational outcomes. Hence, the following research question is proposed:

- *RQ: How do employees perceive CEO ghost posting practice on social media?*

### ***CEO Voice***

The rise in CEO social media use, including ghost posting, raises questions not just about the actual sources of communications from the top of organizational hierarchies, but also about the style of communication. While traditional communication channels and social media channels always have afforded CEOs the opportunity to communicate formally and directly from positions of power, research suggests that social norms and technical features of social media are particularly well suited

for communicating in a conversational style toward the ends of better relationships. Kelleher and Miller (2006) found that readers of organizational blogs perceived an organization's conversational voice as more distinct than readers of the same organization's traditional corporate communication. Since then, as social media have proliferated far beyond blogs, a number of studies with broader samples and other forms of social media have reinforced the theoretical connection between conversational voice and relational outcomes such as trust, control mutuality, and satisfaction (e.g., Kelleher, 2009; Sweetser, 2010; Park & Lee, 2013; Sweetser, English, & Fernandez, 2015; Sweetser & Kelleher, 2016; Sparks, So, & Bradley, 2016).

Conversational voice is defined as "an engaging and natural style of organizational communication as perceived by an organization's publics based on interactions between individuals in the organization and individuals in publics" (Kelleher, 2009, p. 177). A closely related concept that also has been found to correlate with relational outcomes is communicated commitment: "communication in which members of an organization work to express their commitment to building and maintaining a relationship" (Kelleher, 2009, p. 176). Both of these communication strategies, communicating with a human voice and communicating commitment, termed as CEO voice, are available to CEOs when they speak on behalf of their organizations. In fact, CEOs may be in a better position than anyone to leverage the affordances of social media to achieve positive organizational-public relationship outcomes by speaking with their real voices via social media. But what happens when staff members are tasked with communicating the CEO's voice and commitment? It seems likely that the inverse also applies if employees do not respond favorably: ghost posting may undermine authenticity and thereby undermine relational outcomes.

### ***CEO Authentic Leadership***

Meaningful relationships between organizations and their publics are established when there is a perception of sincerity and authenticity (Men & Tsai, 2016). Taking into consideration the hyper-personal nature of social media (Vigden, Sims, & Powell, 2013), authenticity becomes a critical concern when leaders interact with stakeholders. Research has found that publics, including employees, who are more engaged with CEOs on social media tend to perceive the CEO as being more authentic (Men & Tsai, 2016), and that perceived authentic organizational behavior mediates the relationship between communication and organization-public relationships (Shen & Kim, 2012). However, will CEOs be perceived as less authentic by employees when CEO ghost posting (with disclosure or without disclosure) is involved?

Authentic leadership is defined as "a process that draws from both positive psychological capacities and a highly developed organizational context, which results in both greater self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviors on the part of leaders and associates, fostering positive self-development" (Luthans & Avolio, 2003, p. 243). Authentic leadership has been conceptualized as a pattern of leader behaviors characterized by four dimensions: (1) leaders' self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses and values and beliefs; (2) transparency in interpersonal relationship cultivation with their followers, which emphasizes trust that is achieved through leaders' self-disclosure, information sharing, and self-expression; (3) balanced processing of information, in which regardless of the sentiment of viewpoints, leaders analyze all relevant information before making decisions; and (4) internalized high moral standards, in which a positive moral perspective that guides decision making and behaviors is often incorporated (Walumbwa et al., 2008).

### ***Organizational Transparency***

Another focal construct related to CEO ghost posting is organizational transparency. The growth of digital media has enabled organizations to engage with diverse stakeholders in more meaningful and personal ways (Zhong, Hardin, & Sun, 2011). This allowed organizations the opportunity to remain open with diverse stakeholders and increased the publics' expectations of organizational transparency.

Transparency includes three distinct aspects that require communication strategy: substantial information, participation, and accountability (Balkin, 1999; Rawlins, 2009). The purpose of the informational aspect is to increase information flow and improve understanding, as well as meet requirements of truthfulness and substantial completeness. Regarding participation, organizations need to involve stakeholders in the process of determining what information they need. The third aspect involves accountability and the fact that organizations need to be held accountable for their words and actions (Men & Stacks, 2014).

**Relationship of CEO ghost posting with authentic leadership and organizational transparency.** Overall, a CEO's authentic leadership emphasizes truthfulness, genuineness, transparency, and consistency. These dimensions also are key to the perceived authenticity of organizational behavior in general (Shen & Kim, 2012). Given the possible challenges to integrity, honesty, and transparency (Gallicano et al., 2013) posed by CEO ghost posting, it can be predicted that employees' perceptions of CEO engagement in ghost posting will influence their perceptions of CEO authentic leadership. Additionally, CEO ghost posting appears to contradict the transparency principles of truthfulness and accuracy in communication. If the CEO has someone else post or respond to employee comments on his/her behalf, employees' genuine voices can hardly be heard or properly addressed by CEOs, and it is problematic to hold CEOs accountable for the ghost posts. Given the natural association between an organization and its CEO, it is likely that the CEO ghost posting negatively influences perceived organizational transparency by employees. Hence, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- *H1: Employee perceptions of CEO ghost posting negatively influence employee perceptions of CEO authentic leadership.*
- *H2: Employee perceptions of CEO ghost posting negatively influence employee perceptions of organizational transparency.*

**Relationship of CEO conversational voice with authentic leadership and organizational transparency.** When leaders engage in a conversational voice they communicate with a sense of humor and make communication enjoyable. Humor, which generally refers to someone's tendency to amuse others (Martin, 2001), has often been described as an important skill for organizational leaders (Sala, 2003). Thelen (2018) found that when employees believe that their supervisors have an affiliative humor style (i.e., will often amuse others and share funny stories as a way to build relationships and bring people together), they perceive them as being more truthful and genuine. In other words, an affiliative sense of humor was positively associated with supervisor authenticity. Being able to admit mistakes is another important element of having a conversational voice. One of the key aspects of transparency is accountability—in other words, being open to criticism for their words and actions (Balkin, 1999; Rawlins, 2009). As CEOs are often perceived as the face of an organization, their capacity to admit mistakes can increase perceptions of organizational transparency among employees. Therefore, the following hypotheses are suggested:

- *H3: Employee perceptions of CEO conversational voice positively influence employee perceptions of CEO authentic leadership.*

- *H4: Employee perceptions of CEO conversational voice positively influence employee perceptions of organizational transparency.*

### **Employee-Organization Relationships**

Defined as “the degree to which an organization and its employees trust one another, agree on who has the rightful power to influence, experience satisfaction with each other, and commit oneself to the other” (Men & Stacks, 2014, p. 307), employee-organization relationships have been extensively examined as a major outcome of leadership communication and internal public relations (Men & Bowen, 2017). As stated by Hon and Grunig (1999), trust refers to the confidence and willingness that one party has in opening itself to the other party. Satisfaction occurs when both parties are satisfied with their relationship. Commitment is “the extent to which one party believes and feels that the relationship is worth spending energy to maintain and promote” (Hon & Grunig, 1999, p. 20), and control mutuality refers to the “degree to which parties agree on who has rightful power to influence one another” (Hon & Grunig, 1999, p. 19).

#### **Relationship of CEO conversational voice with employee-organization relationships.**

Previous research conducted by Kelleher (2009) found that conversational voice and communicated commitment correlated with commitment, trust, satisfaction, and control mutuality. When CEOs communicate commitment, they are expressing their interest in building and maintaining a relationship. Recently, research has suggested that CEOs’ social media engagement with employees can reduce power distance, shorten the dialogue loop, and contribute to positive employee relationship outcomes (Men, 2015). Hence, the current study suggests the following hypothesis:

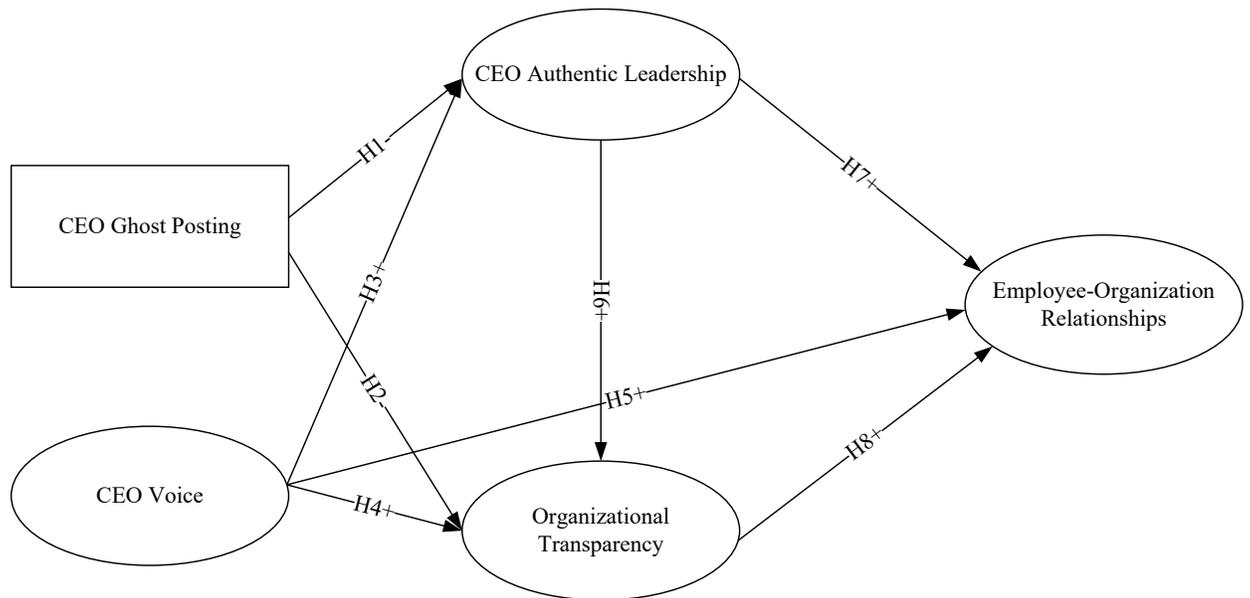
- *H5: Employee perceptions of CEO conversational voice positively influence the quality of employee-organization relationships.*

**Relationship between CEO authentic leadership, organizational transparency, and employee-organization relationships.** Previous research has established the linkages between supervisory authentic leadership, organizational transparency, and employee-organization relationships (Men & Stacks, 2014; Jiang & Men, 2015; Rawlins, 2008). With regards to the relationship between authentic leadership and organizational transparency, previous research has examined the role that authentic managers play in building an environment that is characterized by transparency (Mazutis & Slawinski, 2008). Similarly, a study conducted by Jiang and Luo (2018) found that authentic supervisors influence employee perceptions of their organizations’ communication transparency. Their study also found that authentic leadership and transparent communication are positively related to the level of trust that employees have toward their organizations. Likewise, the current study predicts the positive impact of CEO authentic leadership and organizational transparency on employee-organization relationships.

Based on the preceding discussion, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- *H6: Employee perceptions of CEO authentic leadership positively influence employee perceptions of organizational transparency.*
- *H7: Employee perceptions of CEO authentic leadership positively influence the quality of employee-organization relationships.*
- *H8: Employee perceptions of organizational transparency positively influence the quality of employee-organization relationships.*

Based on hypotheses derived prior research and literature the following conceptual model is proposed (Figure 1).



*Figure 1.* Hypothesized model of the impact of CEO ghost posting and CEO conversational voice on social media on employee perceptions of CEO authentic leadership, organizational transparency, and employee-organization relationships.

### **Method**

To answer the research question and test the hypothesized model, a quantitative online survey with a sample drawn from online research panels through Dynata (formerly Survey Sampling International), a global provider of survey services, was conducted. The population of the proposed study comprised of employees, at different levels of positions, working in organizations with at least 50 employees in the United States.<sup>1</sup> All of the respondents followed their organization’s CEO on at least one social media channel (e.g., blogs, Facebook, Twitter, etc.). Rather than recruiting participant corporations, individual employees who work for a variety of organizations were selected. Quota random sampling strategies were used to obtain a representative sample across different age groups, genders, corporation sizes, income levels, education levels, and industries.

The sample included 549 employees with an average age of approximately 41 years (M=40.86, SD=13.714). Around 59.5% of respondents were female and 40.5% were male. Approximately 40.6% had a non-management position, 24.2% had a lower-level management position, 27.7% had a medium-level management post, and 7.5% were in top management. The majority of respondents (60.7%) stated that they worked in a private-for-profit company, for wages, salary or commissions; 12.6%

<sup>1</sup> Employees of companies with fewer than 50 employees (size class 4 or smaller per [www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)) were excluded from the population in the proposed study because mediated public communication issues were expected to be more salient with CEOs of larger firms.

worked for a private-not-for-profit, tax-exempt, or charitable organization; 6.9% were local government employees; 6.6% were state government employees; 5.1% were federal government employees; 2.9% were self-employed in their own unincorporated business, professional practice or farm; 1.6% were self-employed in their own incorporated business, professional practice, or farm; 0.9% were working without pay in a family business or farm; and 2.7% replied “other.” Regarding total household income before taxes during the past 12 months, 33.4% made less than \$50,000, 42.1% made between \$50,000 and \$99,999, and 24.5% made \$100,000 or more.

Before conducting the main study, a pretest with 100 randomly selected employees recruited through Dynata was conducted. Preliminary results of the reliability and validity of the measures showed satisfactory results, and all of the measurement items on the key variables were retained for the formal survey. The pretest sample was thus included in the final sample.

### **Measures**

Measures in the study were adopted from previous literature and adapted to fit the current study context (see Appendix). Seven-point Likert scales ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” were used to measure the focal constructs. To understand how commonly employees expect ghost posting to occur, three items were adapted from previous literature (Gallicano, Brett, & Hopp, 2013). More specifically, these perceptions were measured using items such as “I think it is *common* for a CEO to have a staff member post on his/her behalf on the CEO’s social media page(s) without disclosure” ( $\alpha=.88$ ). For the proposed ghost posting acceptability scale, six items were adapted from previous literature (Gallicano et. al, 2013). Three of these items were focused on determining how acceptable it was to engage in CEO ghost posting activities without disclosure, and asked questions such as “I think it is *okay* for a CEO to have a staff member manage the CEO’s social media page(s) *without* disclosure” ( $\alpha=.90$ ). The remaining three items were intended to determine how acceptable it was to engage in CEO ghost posting activities with disclosure by asking questions such as “I think it is *okay* for a CEO to have a staff member post on his/her behalf on the CEO’s social media page(s) *with* disclosure” ( $\alpha=.90$ ).

Ten items adapted from Tsai and Men (2016) were utilized to measure CEO authentic leadership, which included three dimensions: CEO transparency, truthfulness/genuineness, and consistency. Items such as “I believe that my CEO’s actions are genuine,” and “The CEO of my organization always tells the truth,” were used in this measure ( $\alpha=.95$ ).

The measure of organizational transparency was adopted from Rawlins (2009) and included 18 items such as “My organization provides accurate information to people like me,” and “My organization freely admits when it has made mistakes,” which measured dimensions of substantial information (7 items,  $\alpha=.93$ ), participation (6 items,  $\alpha=.92$ ), and accountability (5 items,  $\alpha=.79$ ).

The measure of employee-organization relationships was adopted from Hon & Grunig (1999) and included 16 items that assessed relational trust (4 items, e.g., “My organization can be relied on to keep its promises,”  $\alpha=.92$ ), satisfaction (4 items, e.g., “Generally speaking, I am pleased with the relationship my organization has established with people like me”,  $\alpha=.92$ ), commitment (4 items, e.g. “I feel that my organization is trying to maintain a long-term commitment to people like me,”  $\alpha=.92$ ), and control mutuality (4 items, e.g., “My organization and people like me are attentive to what each other say,”  $\alpha=.92$ ).

The measure of CEO voice was adopted from Sweetser & Kelleher (2016). More specifically, the dimension of communicated commitment was measured using five items such as “communicates a desire to build a relationship,” and “demonstrates a commitment to maintain a relationship” ( $\alpha=.90$ ). The conversational voice was measured using six items including “uses a sense of humor in communication,” and “makes communication enjoyable” ( $\alpha=.88$ ).

Descriptive analysis and structural equation modeling (SEM) were conducted to analyze data. Multiple criteria were used to evaluate the goodness-of-model fit, including the comparative fit index (CFI), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and standardized root means square residual (SRMR) indices. These are all a minimal set of fit indexes that should be disclosed and interpreted when reporting the results of SEM analyses (Kline, 2015).

## **Results**

### ***Preliminary Analysis and RQ: How Employees Perceive Ghost Posting***

Preliminary analysis of the data showed that 74% of the respondents follow the CEO of their organization on Facebook, making this social networking site (SNS) the most popular channel to follow CEOs. Twitter (34.4%) and LinkedIn (32.1%) were the second and third most popular channels. Additionally, 18.8% of the total participants followed their CEOs on Instagram, 12.8% followed their blogs, and 11.3% followed them on YouTube. On average, employees agreed that their CEOs engage in ghost posting practices ( $M=4.58$ ,  $SD=1.62$ ), including having a staff member manage the CEO’s social media pages, post or reply to others’ comments on the CEO’s social media pages, as well as write speeches for the CEO. Respondents also agreed with statements that CEO ghosting behavior is relatively common on social media ( $M=5.05$ ,  $SD=1.39$ ). With regard to the acceptability of CEO ghost posting on social media, respondents generally held a neutral or positive view, surprisingly. While the respondents on average were on the fence with regard to whether it is okay for CEO to ghost post without disclosure on social media ( $M=4.05$ ,  $SD=1.61$ ), they were more tolerant of CEO ghost posting on social media with a clear disclosure ( $M=4.82$ ,  $SD=1.53$ ).

A series of t-tests, correlations, and ANOVA analyses were conducted to examine how variables such as organizational size, age, gender, household income, type of employment, and level of position in the organization were related to employee perceptions of CEO ghost posting. Results showed that organizational size significantly affected employees’ perceptions of their CEO’s ghost posting behavior on social media ( $F_{(7, 49.73)}=2.78$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). More specifically, respondents working in larger-sized organizations with at least 2,500 employees ( $M=5.04$ ,  $SD=1.32$ ) were significantly more likely to believe that their CEOs engaged in ghost posting on social media than respondents working in organizations with less than 250 employees ( $M=4.22$ ,  $SD=1.71$ ). Similarly, statistically significant differences also were found between the types of organizations on the questions about how common it is for CEOs to engage in ghost posting ( $F_{(4, 541)}=3.810$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Those working in private-for-profit companies ( $M=5.21$ ,  $SD=1.32$ ) were significantly more likely to think that CEO ghost posting is common than government employees (local, state, and federal) ( $M=4.76$ ,  $SD=1.47$ ) and self-employed (not-incorporated business and incorporated business) respondents ( $M=4.39$ ,  $SD=1.39$ ).

Furthermore, employees who were closer to the CEO in salary in this study were more likely to expect CEO ghost posting ( $r=.15$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). That is, higher salary correlated with greater perceptions of the likelihood of ghost posting. Employees who were closer to the CEO in management position were more likely to accept CEO ghost posting ( $r=.10$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).

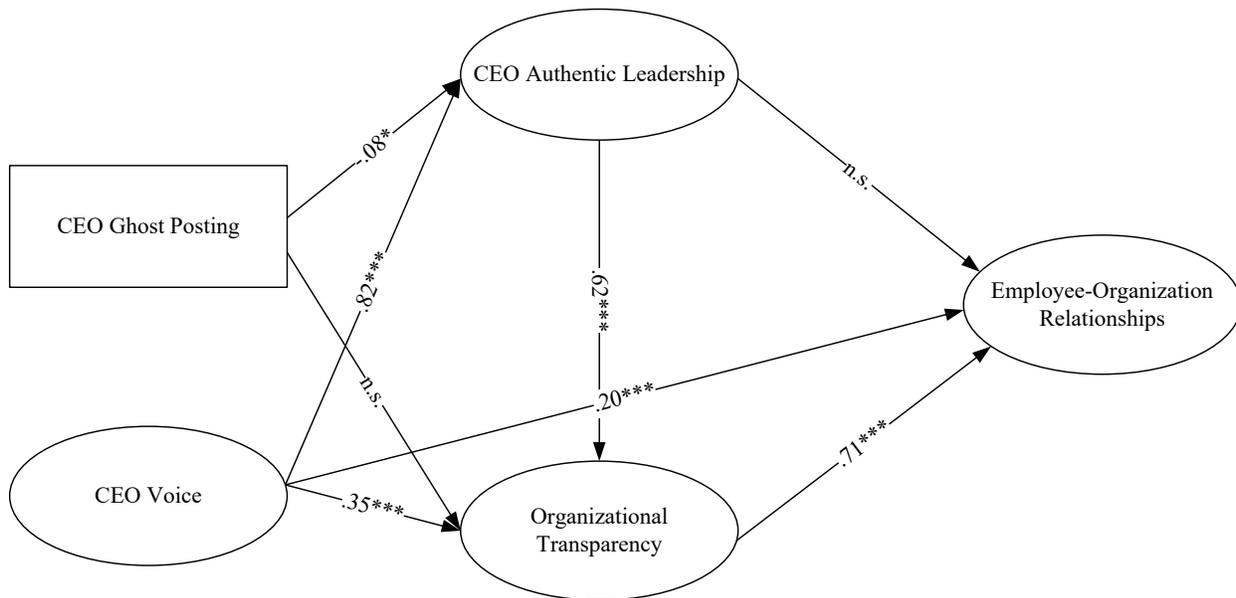
***Analysis of Structural Equation Model***

The analysis of the conceptual model involved a two-stage process: (1) an assessment of the construct validity of the measurement model using confirmatory factor analysis, and (2) an assessment of the structural model. The maximum likelihood method was employed for model estimation. The test results of the initial measurement model indicated an adequate but not good fit with the data:  $\chi^2(56) = 339.85, p < .001, \chi^2/df = 6.07, RMSEA = .09$  (90% confidence interval [CI] = .08–.10), SRMR = .05, Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) = .94, and CFI = .96. The model was then modified accordingly. Byrne (2010, p.111) argues that “forcing large error terms to be uncorrelated is rarely appropriate with real data.” Allowing error covariance within the same construct can also explain content redundancy. Following this line of thinking and based on model modification indices, two error covariances were added.<sup>2</sup> The modified model demonstrated satisfactory fit with the data:  $\chi^2(54) = 289.40, p < .001, \chi^2/df = 5.36, RMSEA = .08$  (90% CI = .07–.09), SRMR = .04, TLI = .95, and CFI = .98. Thus, it was retained as the final CFA model.

The standardized factor loadings ranged from .75 to .91, indicating satisfactory construct validity of the measurement model. The multivariate normality assumption of SEM was evaluated in AMOS before the hypothesized model was estimated. Results indicated that the sample data showed a significant positive multivariate kurtosis. Therefore, bootstrapping ( $N = 2,000$  samples) using the maximum likelihood method was performed to address the multivariate nonnormality of the data. The bootstrap parameter estimations did not deviate from those based on normal theory, indicating that the significant results in Figure 2 remained significant in the bootstrapping process. The hypothesized structural model displayed in Figure 2 demonstrated satisfactory fit to the data:  $\chi^2(55) = 293.05, p < .001, \chi^2/df = 5.33, RMSEA = .08$  (90% confidence interval: .07–.09), SRMR = .04, TLI = .95, and CFI = .97. Six structural paths demonstrated significant results (Figure 2).

---

<sup>2</sup>The error covariance between “satisfaction” and “commitment” was .35 and the error covariance between “CEO truthfulness” and “CEO consistency” was .26.



*Figure 2.* Results of the hypothesized model. Coefficients are standardized regression weights. For the sake of brevity, only the path model is demonstrated. The CFA model pattern coefficients, error terms of indicators and disturbances of endogenous variables were omitted from the figure. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , \*  $p < .05$ .

### Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses 1 and 2 proposed negative effects of CEO ghost posting on perceived CEO authentic leadership and organizational transparency. Results showed that employees' perceptions of CEO ghost posting significantly influenced perceived CEO authentic leadership negatively,  $\beta = -.08$ ,  $p < .01$ , although with small effect size, supporting Hypothesis 1. When employees believed their CEOs engaged in ghost posting on social media, they tended to perceive the CEO as less truthful, genuine, and authentic. Interestingly and unexpectedly, the effect of CEO ghost posting on organizational transparency as perceived by employees was not statistically significant. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was rejected. It appeared that whether the CEO engaged in ghost posting on social media did not essentially matter for how employees evaluated the organization's transparency level.

Hypotheses 3, 4, and 5 predicted positive effects of CEOs' perceived conversational voice on social media on perceptions of CEO authentic leadership, organizational transparency, and employee-organization relationships. Results showed support for all three hypotheses. Specifically, CEO voice demonstrated a strong positive effect on CEO authentic leadership ( $\beta = .82$ ,  $p < .001$ ), a strong positive effect on perceived organizational transparency ( $\beta = .35$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and a moderate positive effect on the quality of employee-organization relationships ( $\beta = .20$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In other words, when the CEO's communication on social media showed commitment to relationship building and used conversational voice by showing a sense of humor, providing feedback, and making communication enjoyable, employees tended to perceive the CEO's leadership is more authentic, the organization being more transparent, and tended to develop better quality relationships with the organization.

Hypothesis 6, 7, and 8 proposed positive associations between perceived CEO authentic leadership, employee perceptions of organizational transparency, and the quality of employee-organization relationships. Results showed strong support for Hypotheses 6 and 8 that perceived CEO authentic leadership would demonstrate a positive effect on perceived organizational transparency ( $\beta = .62, p < .001$ ) and that employee perceptions of organizational transparency would demonstrate a positive effect on employee-organization relationships ( $\beta = .71, p < .001$ ). When the employees perceived their CEOs as more truthful, genuine, and authentic, they tended to perceive the organization as being more transparent. When the organizations were perceived as transparent, employees tended to trust the organization more, be more satisfied with the organization, more committed, and report shared control inside the organization. The direct effect of perceived CEO authentic leadership on employee-organization relationships was not significant due to the strong mediation effect of perceived organizational transparency,  $\beta = .45, p < .001$  (95% CI: .30–.64). Thus, Hypothesis 7 was not supported.

## **Discussion and Conclusions**

### ***Employee Perceptions of CEO Ghost Posting on Social Media***

While the extent to which participants believe that CEO ghost posting occurs in their organizations varied, on average employees in this study agreed that this type of activity is relatively common. Respondents also generally agree that this is a widespread practice that occurs in all organizations. These results align with a previous study conducted by Gallicano, et al. (2014) that showed that on a 5-point Likert scale “64.1% of corporate blog readers agreed or strongly agreed that it is common for the stated author to have a staff member write comments in reply to readers’ comments on the stated author’s blog without a disclosure statement that a staff member is responding on behalf of the stated author” (p. 16). Results also confirmed that disclosure of ghost posting is important to respondents. On average, employees were neutral on the practice of ghost posting without disclosure and more tolerant of ghost posting with disclosure.

### ***Effects of CEO Ghost Posting on Perceived CEO Authentic Leadership and Organizational Transparency***

This study also examined the potential influence of CEO ghost posting practice on employee perceptions of leadership authenticity and organizational transparency. Given that publics are placing increasingly high demand on the organizations’ and leaders’ transparency, openness, integrity, and authenticity in the digital era (Men & Tsai, 2017) and the personal nature of social media, it was hypothesized that CEO ghost posting, i.e., having staff members manage the CEOs’ social media pages, would be disapproved by employees and thus negatively influence employee perceptions of the leader and the organization. Interestingly, the study showed mixed findings regarding the impact of CEO ghost posting. On one hand, CEO ghost posting did cast a negative effect, however small, on perceived CEO authentic leadership. Although employees generally agreed that some degree of CEO ghost posting is acceptable, CEO leadership authenticity was reduced by ghost posting behavior. CEOs who were thought to manage their own social media pages with their genuine voice projected a relatively more authentic leader image among employees. This is consistent with Gallicano et al.’s (2013) finding that respondents who were against ghost blogging associated the practice with less integrity, transparency, and honesty of the author.

On the other hand, unexpectedly, CEO ghost posting practice showed no significant effect on employee perceptions of organizational transparency. In other words, employees seemed not to associate CEO ghost posting behavior with the transparency of the organization. Even though CEOs are generally perceived as the face of the organization among internal and external stakeholders (Men, 2015; Men & Tsai, 2016), a CEO having staff members manage his or her personal social media pages did not necessarily harm perceptions of the organization's transparency. This may be because employees are generally understanding of CEOs' busy schedules and time constraints (Gallicano et al., 2013) and they do not expect CEOs to micro-manage every detail.

As a point of comparison with non-social-media ghostwriting, respondents in this study also were asked about CEOs delivering speeches written by others. Surprisingly, respondents believed that their CEOs were less likely to have a staff member write speeches on the CEO's behalf ( $M=4.21$ ) than have a staff member manage the CEO's social media page ( $M=4.81$ ), have a staff member post on behalf of the CEO ( $M=4.68$ ), or have a staff member respond to readers' comments on the CEO's behalf ( $M=4.68$ ). Apparently, employees commonly expect that someone assists CEOs with social media communication endeavors and accept that CEOs' social media serve more of an organizational function than a personal one. In this study, employees in general reported tolerance or acceptance of CEO ghost posting on social media.

Consistent with previous research (Men & Stacks, 2014; Jiang & Men, 2015), CEO authentic leadership showed a strong and positive effect on employee perceptions of organizational transparency. In other words, when the organization is led by a truthful, genuine, and authentic leader, it is more likely to demonstrate transparency attributes as perceived by employees—such as providing substantial information to employees, inviting employee participation and involving them in identifying the information they need, and showing accountability for the organization's actions and decisions. CEOs as top leaders of the organization set the tone for the company's communication climate (Park & Berger, 2014; Men & Bowen, 2017). The CEO's authentic leadership plays a critical role in fostering organizational transparency.

### ***The Effects of CEO Voice on Perceived CEO Authentic Leadership, Organizational Transparency, and Employee-Organizational Relationships***

Previous research has suggested that organizations that communicate in a conversational voice on social media nurture positive organization-public relational outcomes (e.g., Kelleher, 2009; Sweetser, 2010; Park & Lee, 2013; Sweetser, English, & Fernandez, 2015; Sweetser & Kelleher, 2016; Sparks, So, & Bradley, 2016). Likewise, recent studies that examined CEO communication style and CEO sociability (e.g., Tsai & Men, 2016) also revealed the effectiveness of a personal, conversational, responsive, friendly, sincere, and empathetic CEO communication style on social media in inducing a close, interpersonal-level CEO-public relationship, which in turn enhances organization-public relationships.

Findings of the current study provided additional evidence for the effectiveness of CEO voice in the digital sphere from employees' perspectives. Specifically, when CEO communication on social media was perceived as natural, engaging, personal, conversational, and relationship-oriented, employees tended to perceive the CEO as more authentic, truthful, and genuine and the organization as more transparent. Further, CEOs' communication of commitment with a conversational voice on social media directly contributed to relational

outcomes of employee trust, satisfaction, commitment, and control mutuality. CEO voice in the social media context not only worked effectively for corporate communication but CEO leadership communication as well.

CEOs are often perceived as powerful and formal figures distant from employees; however, the personal and interactive technical features of social media helps humanize CEOs and bring them closer to employees. When CEOs engage in conversations with employees on social media, communicate in a personal, genuine, positive, or humorous tone, and show interests in employees' voice, feedback, and thoughts with a commitment to establishing deeper bonds and relationships, they project an authentic leadership character and meanwhile change their distant and intimidating image to being more approachable and amicable (Tsai & Men, 2016). CEO conversational voice and commitment on social media, including listening to and addressing employee feedback, complaints, or queries in a positive manner, demonstrates the organizations' commitment to openness, transparency, and accountability and care for employees. Similarly, such communicated commitment to relationship nurturing and the CEOs' conversational communication style along with the projected authenticity, genuineness, positivity, and transparency all lead to better employee relational outcomes.

Taken together, it appears that perceived CEO voice plays a more crucial role in influencing employees' perceptions and employee-organization relationships than CEO ghost posting. CEO messages on social media, even if ghost posted, are likely assumed to have CEO approval and represent the CEO's voice and the organization's position. Respondents in this study generally accepted the practice of ghost posting if disclosed. The style of communications and messages on social media (i.e., how they are delivered) weighed more than the actual source of the messages (i.e., who delivered them). A conversational voice is more fitting with the personal and social environment of social media (Tsai & Men, 2016).

### ***Organizational Transparency as the Determinant of Employee-Organization Relationships***

Another major finding of the study was the confirmed strong and positive effect of perceived organizational transparency on the quality of employee-organization relationships. While CEO authentic leadership mattered significantly for employee relational outcomes, such effects were fully mediated via perceived organizational transparency. CEO authentic leadership lays a foundation for organizational transparency. Transparency in the organization nurtures employee trust, satisfaction, commitment, and a sense of shared control. Essentially, when the organization provides timely, substantial, complete, and unbiased information to employees, encourages employee participation and listens closely to employees, and is willing to admit mistakes, accept criticism, and hold itself accountable for its words, actions, and decisions, employees tend to develop meaningful quality relationships with the organization. A transparent organization demonstrates openness, accountability, and confidence. A transparent organization also cares about employees and its ethical conscience, which induces employees' identification with and trust in the organization as well as a sense of empowerment (Men & Bowen, 2017). This finding corroborates several previous studies that have suggested the positive effects of transparent communication on favorable organizational outcomes, such as employee trust (Rawlins, 2009), organizational reputation (van Riel & Fombrun, 2007), employee-organization relationships (Men & Stacks, 2014), and employee work-life enrichment (Jiang & Men, 2015).

### **Theoretical Implications**

The findings of the study contribute to the theorization of CEO leadership communication in the social media era and highlight the importance of a conversational and relationship-oriented communication style in shaping favorable employee perceptions and attitudes. The results also confirm the notion that authenticity and transparency are key leadership and organizational attributes that help cultivate meaning and quality employee-organization relationships, adding to the growing body of knowledge in internal relationship management.

Theoretically, conversational voice appears to be a more global construct derived from all a CEO's communications, including posts that employees assume to be drafted and posted by others on behalf of the CEO. Social media ghost posting is one specific type of communication behavior that, in the broad context of employee-organization relationships, had no significant effect on perceptions of organizational transparency and a small effect on perceptions of the CEO's authentic leadership in this study. In hindsight, it makes sense that employees might assume that even if staff members are writing a CEO's posts, they are doing so consistent with the CEO's actual communication style. The broader communication style, which can be characterized by conversational voice and communicated commitment, matters more than the process by which the messages are created, approved and delivered.

### **Practical Implications**

As a practical matter for public relations, the findings from this study highlight the importance of ensuring that staff-produced social media posts on behalf of the CEO are consistent with the CEO's voice and communicated commitment in other channels. Regardless of whether CEOs seek professional assistance for managing their social media presence or not, the communications must adopt a conversational human voice and show genuineness, truthfulness, authenticity, and a real interest in employees. To the degree that they are consistent with the CEO's other communications and real voice, the items in our measure of voice suggest practical tips for both CEOs and those posting on their behalf (e.g., admit mistakes, use a positive tone, use a sense of humor, positively address complaints or queries, link to competitors when appropriate, demonstrate commitment to the relationship with employees, etc.).

CEO voice not only shapes the CEO's authentic image but also leads to employees' perceptions of organizational transparency and deepens employee relationships with the organization. CEO ghost posting on social media, a generally accepted practice by employees, did not seem to jeopardize organizational transparency or employee-organization relationships, although it casts some negative effect on perceived CEO authentic leadership. Overall, CEO voice on social media and CEO authentic leadership foster organizational transparency, which was shown to help employee-organization relationships.

### **Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research**

Even when employees indicate an awareness that the practice of ghost posting exists, even when they see it as "okay," and even when the practice does not damage perceptions of transparency or organization-employee relationships, some employees are deceived by the practice. So, what is the threshold for ethical practice? If 40% somewhat agree, agree, or strongly agree that it is okay for a CEO to have a staff member respond to reader comments on the CEO's social media pages without disclosure, that still means that 60% disapprove. Even *with*

disclosure, more than 20% of respondents in this study selected an option on the “disagree” side of the scale when asked if ghost posting is okay. Gallicano et al. (2014) applied a “qualified expectation of reality” standard (Wheeler & Gleason, 1995) to suggest that practices that are expected by a large portion of the public may be ethically defensible, but a more thorough ethical examination is in order. For example, a Kantian ethicist may argue for a strict deontological approach that would apply an absolute rule against deceiving anyone, while a more utilitarian approach would weigh the relative good and harm of the consequences. More qualitative research and moral examination in the future would yield a richer understanding of how employees and other publics are affected – negatively and positively – by ghost posting and similar practices.

Future research also may benefit from content analyses or other methods of direct observation of actual communication strategies and tactics compared to employee perceptions of those strategies and tactics. The current study began with employee perceptions of ghost posting, both in their organizations and as a general practice. Another fruitful approach would be to analyze employee perceptions vis-a-vis observed communication content and practice. Although the sampling method in this study was designed to screen out data from respondents who reported working for organizations with fewer than 50 employees, a small percentage of respondents included in the analyses identified themselves as self-employed or working in their own incorporated business, professional practice, or farm. From the data collected it is difficult to discern whether these respondents were referring to two different organizations (i.e., they own their own businesses and also work for larger organizations) or if they are indeed owners of their own business employing 50 or more people. In either case, future research would benefit from having respondents clarify the circumstances and their positions relative to the CEO.

Finally, this study focused exclusively on ghost posting and leadership voice perceptions among employees in the United States. Future research could further investigate how these expectations and outcomes might vary in other countries. Having a better understanding of how internal and external publics in diverse cultural, political, and socio-economic contexts perceive these practices may assist in developing important theoretical, moral, and practical implications.

### References

- Balkin, J. M. (1999). How mass media stimulate political transparency. *Cultural Values*, 3, 393-413.
- Byrne, B. M. (2010). *Structural equation modeling with AMOS: Basic concepts, applications, and programming* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Taylor and Francis Group.
- Devereux, L., Melewar, T. C., & Foroudi, P. (2017). Corporate identity and social media: Existence and extension of the organization. *International Studies of Management & Organization*, 47(2), 110-134.
- Gallicano, T. D., Brett, K., & Hopp, T. (2013). Is ghost blogging like speechwriting? A survey of practitioners about the ethics of ghost blogging. *Public Relations Journal*, 7(3), 1-41.
- Gallicano, T. D., Cho, Y. Y., & Bivins, T. H. (2014). What do blog readers think? A survey to assess ghost blogging and commenting. *Research Journal of the Institute of Public Relations*, 2(1), 1-36.
- Hon, L. C., & Grunig, J. E. (1999). *Guidelines for measuring relationships in public relations*. Gainesville, FL: Institute for Public Relations, Commission on PR Measurement and Evaluation.
- Jiang, H., & Luo, Yi. (2018). Crafting employee trust: from authenticity, transparency to engagement. *Journal of Communication Management*, 22(2), 138-160.
- Jiang, H., & Men, L. R. (2015). Creating an engaged workforce: The impact of authentic leadership, transparent communication, and work-life enrichment. *Communication Research*. DOI: 10.1177/0093650215613137.
- Kelleher, T. (2009). Conversational voice, communicated commitment, and public relations outcomes in interactive online communication. *Journal of Communication*, 59(1), 172-188.
- Kelleher, T. (2015). Relationship management and social media. In J. Ledingham, E-J. Ki, & J.N. Kim (Eds.) *Public Relations as Relationship Management*, (pp. 281-305), 2nd ed. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Kelleher, T., & Miller, B. M. (2006). Organizational blogs and the human voice: Relational strategies and relational outcomes. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 11(2), 395-414.
- Kline, R. B. (2015). *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling*. Guilford publications.
- Luthans, F., & Avolio, B. (2003). Authentic leadership: A positive development approach. In K. S. Cameron, J. E. Dutton, & R. E. Quinn (Eds.), *Positive organizational scholarship: Foundations of a new discipline* (pp. 241-261). San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.
- Martin, R. A. (2001). Humor, laughter, and physical health: Methodological issues and research findings. *Psychological Bulletin*, 127(4), 504-519. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.127.4.504>.
- Mazutis, D., & Slawinski, N. (2008). Leading organizational learning through authentic dialogue. *Management Learning*, 39(4), 437-456.
- Men, L. R. (2015). The internal communication role of the Chief Executive Officer: Communication channels, style, and effectiveness. *Public Relations Review*, 41, 461-471.
- Men, L. R., & Bowen, S. (2017). *Excellence in Internal Communication Management*. Business Expert Press, New York.

- Men, L. R., & Stacks, D. (2014). The effects of authentic leadership on strategic internal communication and employee-organization relationships. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 26(4), 301-324, DOI: 10.1080/1062726X.2014.908720
- Men, L. R., & Tsai, W. S. (2016). Public engagement with CEOs on social: Motivations and relational outcomes. *Public Relations Review*, 42(5), 932-942.
- Neider, L. L., & Schriesheim, C. A. (2011). The authentic leadership inventory (ALI): Development and empirical tests. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 22(6), 1146-1164.
- Park, D., & Berger, B. K. (2004). The presentation of CEOs in the press, 1990-2000: Increasing salience, positive valence, and a focus on competency and personal dimensions of image. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 16(1), 93-125.
- Park, H., & Lee, H. (2013). Show us you are real: The effect of human-versus-organizational presence on online relationship building through social networking sites. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 16(4), 265-271.
- Rawlins, B. (2008). Measuring the relationship between organizational transparency and employee trust. *Public Relations Journal*, 2, 1-21.
- Rawlins, B. (2009). Give the emperor a mirror: Toward developing a stakeholder measurement of organizational transparency. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 21, 71-99.
- Sala, F. (2003). Laughing all the way to the bank. September. Retrieved from Harvard Business Review <https://hbr.org/2003/09/laughing-all-the-way-to-the-bank>.
- Shen, H., & Kim, J. N. (2012). The authentic enterprise: Another buzz word, or a true driver of quality relationships?. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 24(4), 371-389.
- Sparks, B. A., So, K. K. F., & Bradley, G. L. (2016). Responding to negative online reviews: The effects of hotel responses on customer inferences of trust and concern. *Tourism Management*, 53, 74-85.
- Sweetser, K. D. (2010). A losing strategy: The impact of nondisclosure in social media on relationships. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 22(3), 288-312.
- Sweetser, K. D. (2015). Exploring the political organization-public relationship in terms of relationship, personality, loyalty, and outcomes among first-time voters. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 9(3), 217-234.
- Sweetser, K. D., & Kelleher, T. (2016). Communicated commitment and conversational voice: Abbreviated measures of communicative strategies for maintaining organization-public relationships. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 28(5-6), 217-231.
- Sweetser, K. D., & Metzgar, E. (2007). Communicating during crisis: Use of blogs as a relationship management tool. *Public Relations Review*, 33(3), 340-342.
- Sweetser, K. D., English, K., & Fernandes, J. (2015). Super PACs and strong relationships: The impact of digital interaction on the political organization-public relationship. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 27(2), 101-117.
- Thelen, P. D. (2018). Supervisor humor styles and employee advocacy: A serial mediation model. *Public Relations Review*, 45(2), 307-318.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2019.02.007>
- Tsai, W. -S. & Men, L. R. (2016). Social CEOs: The effects of CEOs' communication styles and parasocial interaction on social networking sites. *New Media & Society*, DOI: 10.1177/1461444816643922.
- van Riel, C. B. M., & Fombrun, C. J. (2007). *Essentials of corporate communication*. London: Routledge.

- Vigden, R., Sims, J., & Powell, P. (2013). Do CEO bloggers build community. *Journal of Communication Management*, 17(4), 364-385.
- Walumbwa, F. O., Avolio, B. J., Gardner, W. L., Wernsing, T. S., & Peterson, S. J. (2008, February). Authentic leadership: Development and validation of a theory-based measure. *Journal of Management*, 34, 89-126.
- Weber Shandwick, (2012). The social CEO: executives tell all. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.webershandwick.com/uploads/news/files/Social-CEO-Study.pdf>
- Wheeler, T., & Gleason, T. (1995). Photography or photofiction: an ethical protocol for the digital age. *Visual Communication Quarterly*, 2(1), 8-12.
- Zhong, B., Hardin, M., & Sun, T. (2011). Less effortful thinking leads to more social networking? The associations between the use of social network sites and personality traits. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 27(3), 1265–1271.

## **Appendix: Key Measures**

### **I. CEO Ghost Posting**

1. Do you follow your CEO on any social media channels (e.g., blogs, Facebook, Twitter, etc.)?
2. If yes, on which of the following channels do you follow the CEO in your organization?
  - a. Blog
  - b. Facebook
  - c. Twitter
  - d. LinkedIn
  - e. Instagram
  - f. YouTube
  - g. Other (Please specify \_\_\_\_\_)
3. On a scale of 1-7 (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree), indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements.
  - 1) I think it is *common* for a CEO to have a staff member manage the CEO's social media page(s) without disclosure.
  - 2) I think it is *common* for a CEO to have a staff member post on his/her behalf on the CEO's social media page(s) without disclosure.
  - 3) I think it is *common* for a CEO to have a staff member respond to the readers' comments on his/her behalf on the CEO's social media page(s) without disclosure.
  - 4) I think it is *okay* for a CEO to have a staff member manage the CEO's social media page(s) without disclosure.
  - 5) I think it is *okay* for a CEO to have a staff member post on his/her behalf on the CEO's social media page(s) without disclosure.
  - 6) I think it is *okay* for a CEO to have a staff member respond to the readers' comments on his/her behalf on the CEO's social media page(s) without disclosure.
  - 7) I think it is *okay* for a CEO to have a staff member manage the CEO's social media page(s) *with* disclosure.
  - 8) I think it is *okay* for a CEO to have a staff member post on his/her behalf on the CEO's social media page(s) *with* disclosure.
  - 9) I think it is *okay* for a CEO to have a staff member respond to the readers' comments on his/her behalf on the CEO's social media page(s) *with* disclosure.
4. On a scale of 1-7 (1=not at all, 7=very much), to what extent do you believe your organization's CEO engage in the following activities?
  - 1) have a staff member manage the CEO's social media page(s)

- 2) have a staff member post on his/her behalf on the CEO's social media page(s)
- 3) have a staff member respond to the readers' comments on his/her behalf on the CEO's social media page(s)
- 4) have a staff member write speeches on the CEO's behalf

**Source:**

Gallicano TD, Brett K, & Hopp T (2013). Is ghost blogging like speechwriting? A survey of practitioners about the ethics of ghost blogging. *Public Relations Journal* 7(3): 1-41.

## **II. Perception of CEO Authentic Leadership**

*Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements about the CEO in your organization: (1 = completely disagree, 7 = completely agree).*

- 1) The CEO of my organization wants to understand how his/her decisions affect people like me.
- 2) The CEO of my organization provides information that is useful to people like me.
- 3) The CEO of my organization wants to be accountable to people like me for his/her actions.
- 4) The CEO of my organization wants people like me to know what he/she is doing and why he/she is doing it.
- 5) The CEO of my organization always tells the truth.
- 6) I believe that my CEO's actions are genuine.
- 7) I believe that my CEO's posts on his/her social media pages are genuine.
- 8) I feel that the CEO of my organization accepts and learns from mistakes.
- 9) I believe that my CEO's behavior matches his/her core values and beliefs.
- 10) I think the CEO of my organization matches what he/she says with action.

**Source:**

Men, L. R., & Tsai, W. S. (2016). Public engagement with CEOs on social media: Motivations and relational outcomes. *Public Relations Review*, 42(5), 932-942.

## **III. Organizational Transparency**

*Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements about your organization's level of transparency: (1 = completely disagree, 7 = completely agree).*

1. My organization asks for feedback from people like me about the quality of its information. **[Participative]**
2. My organization involves people like me to help identify the information I need. **[Participative]**
3. My organization provides detailed information to people like me. **[Participative]**

4. My organization makes it easy to find the information people like me need. **[Participative]**
5. My organization asks the opinions of people like me before making decisions. **[Participative]**
6. My organization takes the time with people like me to understand who we are and what we need. **[Participative]**
7. My organization provides information in a timely fashion to people like me. **[Substantial]**
8. My organization provides information that is relevant to people like me. **[Substantial]**
9. My organization provides information that can be compared to previous performance. **[Substantial]**
10. My organization provides information that is complete. **[Substantial]**
11. My organization provides information that is easy for people like me to understand. **[Substantial]**
12. My organization provides accurate information to people like me. **[Substantial]**
13. My organization provides information that is reliable. **[Substantial]**
14. My organization presents more than one side of controversial issues. **[Accountable]**
15. My organization is forthcoming with information that might be damaging to the organization. **[Accountable]**
16. My organization is open to criticism by people like me. **[Accountable]**
17. My organization freely admits when it has made mistakes. **[Accountable]**
18. My organization provides information that can be compared to industry standards. **[Accountable]**

**Source:**

Rawlins, B. (2009). Give the emperor a mirror: Toward developing a stakeholder measurement of organizational transparency. *Journal of Public Relations Research, 21*, 71–99.

**IV: Employee-Organization Relationships**

1. Whenever my organization makes an important decision, I know it will be concerned about people like me. **[Integrity]**
2. My organization can be relied on to keep its promises. **[Dependability]**
3. I believe that my organization takes the opinions of people like me into account when making decisions. **[Dependability]**
4. My organization has the ability to accomplish what it says it will do. **[Competence]**
5. I am happy with my organization. **[Satisfaction]**
6. Both my organization and people like me benefit from the relationship. **[Satisfaction]**
7. Most people like me are happy in their interactions with my organization. **[Satisfaction]**
8. Generally speaking, I am pleased with the relationship my organization has established with people like me. **[Satisfaction]**
9. I feel that my organization is trying to maintain a long-term commitment to people like me. **[Commitment]**

10. I can see that my organization wants to maintain a relationship with people like me. **[Commitment]**
11. There is a long-lasting bond between my organization and people like me. **[Commitment]**
12. Compared to other organizations, I value my relationship with my organization more. **[Commitment]**
13. My organization and people like me are attentive to what each other say. **[Control Mutuality]**
14. My organization believes the opinions of people like me are legitimate. **[Control Mutuality]**
15. In dealing with people like me, my organization has a tendency to throw its weight around. **[Control Mutuality]**
16. My organization really listens to what people like me have to say. **[Control Mutuality]**

**Source:**

Hon, L. C., & Grunig, J. E. (1999). *Guidelines for measuring relationships in public relations*. Gainesville, FL: Institution for Public Relations.

**V. CEO Voice**

My CEO's communication on social media...

*Communicated Commitment*

1. uses a positive/optimistic tone
2. expresses cheer & optimism about the future
3. implies relationship has future/long term commitment with the employees
4. communicates desire to build relationship
5. demonstrates a commitment to maintain a relationship

*Conversational voice*

6. uses a sense of humor in communication
7. provides connections to competitors
8. makes communication enjoyable
9. would admit mistakes
10. provides prompt/uncritical feedback when addressing criticism
11. positively addresses complaints or queries

**Source:**

Sweetser, K. D., & Kelleher, T. (2016). Communicated commitment and conversational voice: Abbreviated measures of communicative strategies for maintaining organization-public relationships. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 28(5-6), 217-231.