

# **Authenticity and Social Media**

*Full Paper*

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## **Abstract**

Authenticity is a fundamental question to human existence, regardless of any technology or media. However, the relationships between authenticity and technology have not been widely studied. This research proposes a framework of examining the effects of authenticity (in dimensions of authentic self, being, and context) and quality on technology use. It is proposed that both authenticity disposition and quality disposition moderate the relationship between the perceived authenticity (in self and being) and the use of technology, such as social media. Technology, if constructed as an authentic context, can mediate the relationship between authentic self/being and the technology use. This paper relies on existentialist's view on authenticity, bases on the Theory of Quality (Dewey, 1960), and extends the framework by Pallud and Straub (2007).

## **Keywords**

Authenticity, IS Philosophy, Technology, Theory of Quality, Social Media

## **Introduction**

Authenticity, often implying truism, truthfulness, and protection from falsehood, is a crucial concept of human existence and in cultural studies. Authenticity has been debated in the earliest discourses on language (e.g., a basic form of media), representation, and the self, going back as far as to Socrates and Plato, and Hamlet's soul-searching (Straub, 2012). Authenticity is even a matter of life and death to existentialist philosophers such as Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger (Straub, 2012).

However, authenticity has not been widely studied in information systems research. Few research related to technology has discussed authenticity. Simon (1969, p.4) mentioned that technology was "man-made as opposed to natural," which may already imply some degree of falsehood. Pallud and Straub (2007) continued this line of thought and debated that "the word 'technology' seems to jar with the word 'authenticity,' in that technology connotes things that are fake or simulated whereas authenticity connotes things that are natural and real." However, the importance of studying authenticity in relation to technology use was mentioned by Dimoka et al (2012). It was even suggested that authenticity, as part of the cognitive and emotional processing of technology and genuine artifacts, could be studied with neurophysiological tools. This research's objective is to examine the relationship between authenticity and technology use, with social media as the focal technology for discussion.

Even though there are many kinds of authenticity (Straub, 2012) especially when applying it in different fields such as literature and arts, this paper mainly refers authenticity to what Sartre defines as "... (your) choosing freely without rationalizing or pretending that someone or something made you choose the way you did, and fully accepting the consequences of your choices" (Woodhouse, 2000, p.150).

An authentic self is honest to the self, with the open acceptance to all of one's intent, decisions, actions, and their consequences. An authentic self is a norm, a rule, a form of living-in a place, a form of living-through instruments, and a form of living-with instrumental ties. Social media is a relatively new method or way of living: in a virtual place, through technology, and with virtual social ties. They are merely the new tools for living in this widely connected technical modern world, either authentically, or not.

McLuhan (1994, p. xi) has famously stated that “we shape our tools, and there-after our tools shape us.” Would this hold true for the new tools of social media? Information technologists shaped and continue reshaping social media technical platforms and social structures with hustle and bustle of new features. However, would or should social media subsequently shape us, users and non-users? If so, to what degree, and in what aspects? And how?

Are the existing users of social media simply accepting the possible behavioral and social changes, both explicit and implicit? Are the current non-users but potential future users contemplating on their willingness of accepting these changes? Are the hardcore non-users already rejecting the new tools due to the fear of any potential adverse changes, or something else?

Let us simplify the question from “us” to “self” first. What traits or attributes of a person (self) *should not* be shaped (i.e., changed) by a tool such as technology? What traits or attributes *could* be shaped? When the “wisdom of the crowd” from social media has influenced one’s purchasing preferences and behaviors, or one’s “social network ties” have been widely broadened but weakened facilitated by the easiness of making “friends” on social media, is authenticity a trait of self that should not be easily swayed by social media? Or, is authenticity a trait of self that could predict social media use? The latter question is similar to what Pallud and Straub (2007) have asked – “does a disposition toward authenticity predict IT usage?”

One may argue that authenticity is a trait with a clear yes-and-no undertaking, regardless of whether the tool or technology is print media, social media, or even face-to-face media of verbal communication and visual performance. Others may argue that authenticity is a trait that resides between the extremes of two-ends and hence slides in a spectrum.

We take the second stand of many shades of authenticity. Authenticity, like any other traits in a person and/or in a relationship to others, can be fluid, flexible, dynamic and hence shapeable. It is a trait in spontaneous presence of the self, in a relation to others, open to all contextual possibilities; yet it also has a deep root in morality. Social media is a new contextual environment to shape and reshape authenticity. Therefore, we ask the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the relationships between perceived authenticity and the use of social media?

RQ2: Can authentic context, through systematic restructuring and allowing for long-term self and others’ reflection, affect the relationships between perceived authenticity and hence the use of social media?

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. We first examine authenticity in detail in authentic self, authentic being, and authentic context. Then we briefly discuss the attributes of social media that differ from the traditional media. We further investigate authenticity in social media through proposing a framework to answer the research questions. Then we discuss and conclude.

## **Background and Literature Review**

### ***Dimensions of Authenticity***

In order to examine authenticity in detail and facilitate the study between authenticity and the use of technology such as social media, we suggest three dimensions of authenticity: authentic self, authentic being, and authentic context.

#### **Authentic Self**

To the self, authenticity as an existential object shows up as a consequence of a person’s choices within a situation. Situations are full of affordances and constraints on one’s decision, actions, and the

consequences or effects of the decision and actions. Being authentic is being conscious of one's location and stand in a particular situation.

Decision and consequential actions situationally are grounded in silent paradigms. An authentic person (self) is authentic as living in a paradigmatic space and whose rationality appearing in decisions and actions affects honest and true consequences in affording and constraining situations. The purpose is true to the situation. If the purpose is for merely the decision and actions appearing, it is self (and others) deceptive. In other words, the decisions and actions are inauthentic. Decision and actions are authentic to the degree to which they are real responses to the situation. But if the purpose or goal of the decision, actions and consequences is merely the appearance -- their showing up in the external interactions or media, then the self (the personal manifestation) shown is deceptive, fake, or inauthentic. The decision, actions and whatever consequences or effects there are, are delusional.

Hence, authenticity is a presentation of the self in a truthful way according to the paradigmatic situation, regardless of the situation presented, whether as traditional interactions or social media. In a sense, the use of any media is an appearing of one's decision and actions. Social media, as well as traditional media, are different extensions of interacting face-to-face.

Being authentic in this world is perhaps a search for the Real and for a trusting belief that one's language can descriptively express the Real and the situations in which we find ourselves acting (Barrett, 1964, p. 29). Everyday language is full of uncertainty and banalities; everything is talked about and nothing is talked about – the chirpings of sparrow. This trivializes the human project of existing as an authentic self in the world (Barrett, 1964, pp. 56-57).

What is the human project of exiting? What is the Real? Maybe before asking what the Real is in a spiritual and sublime sense, one should simply first inquire about what is the organic, bodily Real for being a human. The minimum need for human existence requires the understanding and management of the organic body. Being an authentic self is to at least recognize the physical constraints of such a human body.

### **Authentic Being**

An inauthentic self only cares about the appearance in a certain way, but does not care about the consequences of one's decisions and actions. Consequences may affect both self and others. An authentic self is not to be concerned about only oneself, but to include the concerns for others as well.

As an authentic self is not to live *for* and *by* oneself, but to, ideally, *forget* oneself and to *be present* in the situation, of interacting with others, the environment, and nature, an authentic self should respect and appreciate, and cause no harm to others, the environment, and nature. Heidegger (1977) discusses the importance of not taking away the dignity in others, both animated and unanimated.

An authentic living is not to live in separation, but to live in-between, and such in-between-ness is a mirror, a bond, a merging, a together-ness of action-and-reaction that reflect and embody the mutual-ness. Hence, to respect and appreciate, and to cause no harm to others, the environment, and nature is to respect and appreciate, and cause no harm to the self. In fact, the in-between-ness is the "observer" (like that in the quantum spilt experiment) that mutually affects both the self and others.

Such an awareness of living in-between is, both a fact and an aim. For those who recognize and sustain such an awareness, authenticity is an innate given, and hence a cognitive fact. For those who recognize but not sustain such an awareness, authenticity is to be reminded, and hence requires cognitive efforts. For those who do not recognize such an awareness but to live in separation, authenticity is an aim, and hence requires a cognitive "shock."

Being authentic also means being free. But that freedom is not without constraints. The constraints are of "cause no harm," ethical behaviors, and morality. Within these bounds, one can be freely expressive of one's spontaneities. There are no more needs for either the decisions or the foresights for consequences, as the actions within the natural goodness, ethics, and morality, there would be no ill-intended consequences. Within these bounds, freedom flies with the wings of spontaneous creativity and fun – expressed in forms of innovation, arts, or anything that does not even have a label or belong to a particular ontological category. The sparks of such genuine creativity are the true diversity-- the engine of

inventing new tools and the new expressions and thoughts propelling the society, to move forward either artistically or scientifically or both.

### **Authentic Context**

Situations matter, to a certain degree. “Authenticity could not become such a compelling concept if modern society did not make it more and more difficult, almost impossible, to live a human life” (Barrett, 1964, pp. 99-100).

Every event or affair happens in the way it happens because of a context of possibilities. Every tool to be used exists within a context. All media, as a way of being in this world, is inauthentic if the media closes off access to the contexts and possibilities (or response, of interpretation) (Barrett, 1964, p. 156).

We must begin where we are historically, in order to realize our authentic forms of living. We must begin within our communities and our paradigmatic situations; these are structures, the matrix, underlying possibilities of authentic existence (Barrett, 1964, p. 88).

Everyday actions are choices made about the purpose of being-in-the-world among the many possibilities which our environing world presents to us. These possibilities are the structures of doings and sayings for us, for ourselves, personally in our situations in our world. These possibilities provide us with the situations within which we live (Barrett, 1964, pp. 157-163). And if the situations cannot be determined then the activity in humanly inauthentic.

Authentic living in a place and possible situations is about facing-up to events and affairs and the decisions we have made in relation to these events and affairs. There are all kinds of possibilities through which we must make our own way. This making of our own way of being in this world, of living these forms of life, in these social and linguistic games which we see to present ourselves to others, is the search for the authentic self. Social interactions and media place us in these situations of possible authenticity (Barrett, 1964, pp. 68-69).

Everyday awareness is a shallow experience. It is mostly inauthentic. There is no realization that actions and personal decisions happen within webs of meanings reaching beyond the personal realms. These webs of meanings constitute contexts and situations of possibilities and relationships. Without a presumed awareness of these, everyday life is inauthentic, especially in the presentational mode of social media (Barrett, 1964, p. 150).

### **Social Media as a Context**

Any media is a social media. Print media (e.g., books, newspapers) and visual media (e.g., televisions and films) are all made to reach social audiences. The term “social media” coined in the Internet era specifically refers to the web-enabled interactive media. Because of the features of the Internet technology, social media with this modern technology has two uniqueness in comparison to the traditional social media: *immediacy* and *lack of real-time control*.

Events of live-streaming crimes have sprout on the Facebook, the most well-known social media nowadays. With the immediate accessibility to networked technology through convenient smartphone technologies, the social media technical platform has been used with both good and bad intentions. The lack of real-time controls for immediate content have become a growing concern. Social media, in comparison to the traditional media, does not have a mature governing structure for its free flow content. This no or little content filtering is both a blessing and a curse. It encourages more content generation, immediate feedback, but with lesser accountability and potentially lesser quality.

Content on social media, both as an original posting and its responses, are generated much more frequently and broadly by anyone who wishes to do so than that of traditional media. The audience of its content could be world-wide and the audience feedback is more immediate and interactive. Even though the online websites of traditional media allow for some social interactions among their readership, but this is a function with lesser emphasis than those traditional media functions, such as editing and presenting the disseminated information.

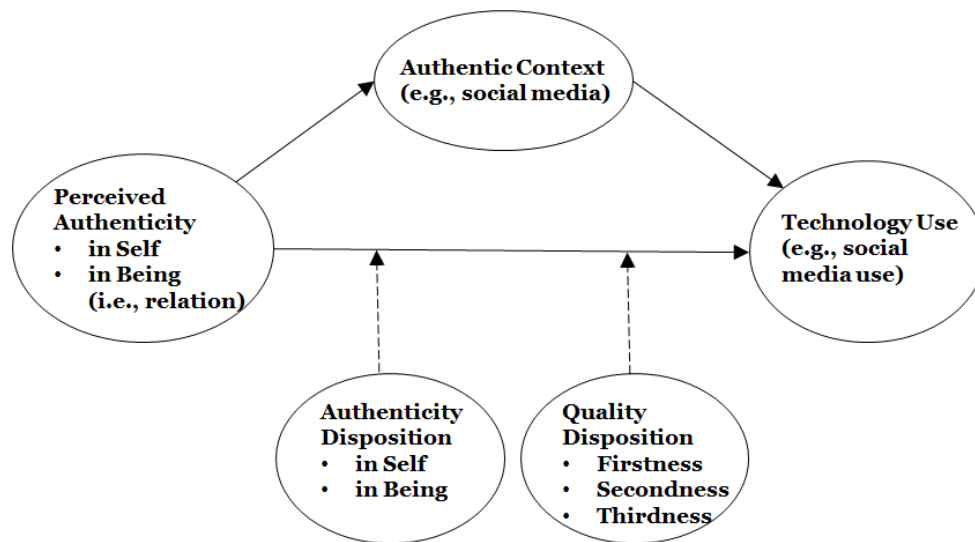
Social media content is not as filtered, edited, or regulated as that of traditional media has been; which makes lesser accountability for content posted and the deception through social media much easier and immediate. There are editors, interviewers, reporters, broadcast managers, etc. in the traditional media such as newspaper and television to serve as the filter, the editor, the balancer, and the controller for the interviewed or reported information. There are no such professional equivalents in social media.

The net-neutrality offered by technology providers is to create the equal venue for content expression. However, whether or not social media should take the responsibility and accountability, like what the traditional media have done, of serving a role of content “editor” or at least a filter for taking out “fake news,” “inappropriate content,” etc., and to what degree, is debatable.

Like it or not, a side-effect of any media, with its wide accessibility to audience, is marketing. Because of that, media is also a commerce platform for marketing. When content is mingled potentially for an alternative purpose of marketing, the quality of the content becomes questionable. The accessibility of the technology also allows for individuals, besides businesses and organizations, to market themselves to the masses.

## Research Model

To answer the research questions aforementioned, the following research model of authenticity and technology is proposed (see Figure 1). The context of social media is exemplified. And the three dimensions of authentic self, being, and context are included.



**Figure 1. The Research Model of Authenticity and Technology Use**

### ***Authentic Self and Social Media***

#### **Authenticity Disposition**

To self, social media is a channel for presentation. It is nothing more than a channel, except for its easy immediate access and pervasiveness. If it is the “real life” that is being presented, then it is an authentic presentation. Otherwise, it is inauthentic. If the intent of self-presentation is to deceive, then social media becomes an easy tool for wide-spread deception. It is the authenticity disposition (Pallud and Straub, 2007) that matters, not the context or the tool itself.

Social media can be human action (in the form of text and images) which can be a way of being authentic in this world if contextual possibilities are realized. Or, social media can be a mode of inauthentic presentation of one's self. It depends upon a personal awareness of context (Barrett, 1964, p. 23).

The texting, the chatter, the images on social media, if considered to be the real end of human endeavors, create and present an inauthentic face to the world and to other people. This face of being in the world is inauthentic because it is a face of fear in response to the basic human sense of anxiety which accompanies all human existence (Barrett, 1964, pp. 58-59).

According to Heidegger, Sartre, and other existentialists, the feeling of anxiety is a basic possibility needed for being authentically human. The turning of this sense of angst to the face of the human condition is a turn to the inauthentic (Barrett, 1964, pp. 58-60). Any tool of human expression, social media in particular, can be used in this existential turn.

Anxiety is a basic emotion felt by humans. The process of escaping to the fantasy world in order not to deal with anxiety is inauthentic to oneself. Tools of human expression, such as social media, are used when creating the inauthentic self.

According to Pallud and Straub (2007), authenticity disposition could moderate the relationship between perceived authenticity and information technology use. Self's identity (Carter and Gover, 2015), and self's authenticity disposition relate to the use of social media. This leads to the following proposition:

**P1:** *Authenticity disposition moderates the relationship between perceived authenticity in self and the use of technology (such as social media).*

## **Quality Disposition**

Symbolic representation of self in media is only a snap-shot and hence a limited presentation of self. Peirce introduced, in his theory of quality, three levels of quality: Firstness of self-experience, Secondness of relationships, and Thirdness of symbolic representation (Dewey, 1960, pp. 199-209). Media is at the level of symbolic representation. It is not the true experience. If a large portion of one's daily life is spent in languages and/or in broadcasting texts and images, then one is reducing the percentage of truly living in life experiences. When one is living life through a screen, there is an opportunity cost. The cost is not being present when experiencing the moments that make life authentic.

One can choose to focus on engaging at different levels of living – 1) living in and mindfully experiencing the worldly life (e.g., truly be present with a nice meal and take time to savor the food); 2) living in frequent interruptions of media snapshots (e.g., take pictures whenever there are nice meals and spend time posting them); and 3) living in an entirely virtual worlds (e.g., play video games of cooking and gourmet dining with often the empty stomach or junk food intakes).

If one's physical body is immortal, one can have them all – one would have the leisure to choose to engage at all levels of "living" for how long as one wishes for. The issue is –a human's physical body is not immortal and a human's sensory organs cannot be stimuli-overloaded without experiencing adverse effects. There are opportunity costs of "living" at a particular level. The question is: which level of living one chooses to focus on. Isn't that the Firstness level of quality of living is the most essential? To answer this question, the following proposition is introduced:

**P2:** *Quality disposition moderates the relationship between perceived authenticity in self and the use of technology (such as social media).*

## **Authentic Being and Social Media**

### **Performing-for-Impression**

A short video on social media shows that, upon seeing a camera, a toddler girl who was throwing a tantrum immediately changed her attitude into that of a glamorous happy child. In the age of the social media, this has become common for many people. People have a tendency to act in front of a camera, or the presence of others. There are signals that are given intentionally by the actor's posing for a camera and expressions in images and words and that may be given off unintentionally by the actor's non-verbal

messages delivered (clothing, surroundings, etc.) (Goffman, 1959, p.2). Both types of signals are often consciously or subconsciously made or selected to impress the audience to present an inaccurate, better self than the real self in daily life.

There are stories of teenage girls who post a lot of selfies with luxury items and well-groomed pets in resort-like living situations who are actually poor and unhappy—they purchase and then return the luxury items just for the purpose of taking and posting selfies. They present a false image of themselves for their false egos and live beyond their means without considering the consequences. They may even become habituated with their own false images and live an inauthentic life just for the purpose of making good but false impressions.

### **Media**

“The media is the message” (McLuhan, 1994). Social media information such as images and video is captured through recording, encoding/decoding, and post-production. The mechanisms of technology, which are the lens, the recorders, the light, and the computers, would modify and are often intentionally made to beautify that information. In the world of traditional media, this beautified information is costly and difficult to obtain. Celebrities create a career out of showing their mostly inaccurate selves to the world. The everyday consumer follows their inaccurate selves, which they want to emulate. A normal person desires to look like these glamorous stars, and they buy into the media’s message; however, the media and its message could be very inauthentic to the real world.

### **Observer**

Even with a natural, true master of acting who will not be influenced by the appearance of a camera or a video recorder, the quantum nature of human consciousness still prevents the “true” capture of the master simply because of the observation effects as those depicted in the famous split experiment. The mere consciousness and intention of the person who decides on observing or directing behind the lens (either as self for a selfie picture or video or others such as friends or professional photographers and videographers) would also “participate” in the performance of the actor in front of the lens. The very intent of posting in social media, either by self or others or both, in the present or future, may have actually changed the situation. Social media, in fact, serves as an observer that has already implicitly actively “participated” in the self’s living experiences, even though self does not know about it explicitly.

### **Marketing**

A “reality show” is often not about the “real life.” There, the “reality” is not actually “real.” A family in a reality show may seem to be discussing trivial issues in life like the audience may encounter in their own lives. However, the life presented in a reality show is not about the life that is being lived, but about “appearing” for the audience. If it is the mere “appearing” as if it is truly “being lived,” then there is no authenticity in such an appearance.

There are stories that one risks one’s life in order to pose for adventurous selfie pictures. One may easily realize that climbing up to rooftops and high cliffs to pose just for selfies are stupid actions; however, it is hard for one to realize texting and taking selfies in a moving car is also a risky behavior that is not respectful to one’s own and others’ bodily human existences. Living safely and healthy for one’s human body is, and should always be, a higher priority than one’s social interactions. Only healthy, well-rested humans can better project positive energies through their presentations to the outer world.

For the increasing culture of selfies and self-celebratization, it is the examination of the intent behind the selfie-related behaviors that would help to understand whether or not there is authenticity. If the purpose of selfies and self-celebratization is to serve a common good for others at the end while the self-promotion is only a path, a tool to this end purpose, then such an intent makes the self-celebratization authentic, to a certain degree. Such a degree depends on to what extent one does self-promotion. If such a self-promotion has required the self to focus more on the self-presentation rather than to serve the original cause, then such self-promotion has become a lip service for the underlying common-good cause without taking the essential actions for the cause. It often requires two different sets of skills to either glamorize or do the actual work (Goffman, 1959, p.33). This is why there often needs to be a role of a spokesperson. The self, with the obsessive focus on taking selfies and self-promotion, may have deviated from the original intent of serving a deeper, good-cause purpose that requires real authentic actions than just the appearances and marketing.

Here is the follow-up question – is there a need for selfies and self-promotion? If one has really accomplished a good deed, it is up to the others to take notice, and it is up to the beneficiaries of the good deed to appreciate and voice their appreciations. The goodness generated is in the actions and reactions (Firstness and Secondness). Its presentation in the Thirdness is a residual effect rather than a cause, most of the times, unless the Thirdness serves a function of having promoted the Firstness and Secondness. If the actions and reactions have been done, it is the others who would make it known. If the actions haven't started yet and need the help of being known, it is the combination of self-presentation and others' taking notice, and their togetherness that make the actions happen. Selfies and self-celebratization alone are not a necessity but a deception on their own. Being authentic, hence, also implies to be self-responsible and not to take others' merits as one's own.

Is there any authentic marketing? If marketing is to serve the purpose of being informative to the right audience who needs to be informed, then it is authentic. If marketing is to serve the purpose of enticing and manipulating the audience to purchase something unnecessary or to misrepresent what is advertised, then it is inauthentic.

The above discussions regarding the relation between self and others lead to proposition 3. And similar to proposition 2, quality disposition is considered in proposition 4.

**P3:** *Authenticity disposition moderates the relationship between perceived authenticity in being and the use of technology (such as social media).*

**P4:** *Quality disposition moderates the relationship between perceived authenticity in being and the use of technology (such as social media).*

### **Authentic Context and Social Media**

A person can only pretend for so long. A person who subconsciously does not know how to live as an authentic self could get help from social media's long term effects if the others in the person's social circles are more authentic and provide constructive criticism. Such a person may also be reminded, in the long-run, of one's own living memories in the social media, and could possibly detect his or her own inconsistencies to what the reality demands.

Human memory is far from being perfect. It is so limited and distorted for most of the people that memory itself is neither comprehensive nor truthful. Computers have much better memory in a much larger capacity. With social media's information retention and the potential add-ons of technical plug-ins that can provide statistical learning of self and self's longitudinal interactions in social groups, one can obtain a relatively more authentic memory of oneself and the statistical inference of such a computerized memory. Note that the computer-facilitated memory of the self could still just be the memory of limited-authentic self. It is the real improvement in self authenticity that counts. In other words, self-reflection in the long run may serve the purpose for increasing one's awareness in authenticity.

Social media's immediate, potentially pervasive, and intensified interactions between self and others, and hence serving as *a space* (not *the space*) of choice for some, could accelerate the mirroring (reflection) of the in-between-ness, and hence more frequent examination of the gap between inauthentic decisions, actions and their consequences and the original authentic intent.

Social media may as well serve as *a space* for freedom of expression. Maybe this is the true attraction of social media where one can choose spontaneously not to be in any traditional social roles any more (or less) that are typically confined in social situations with social norms. One can truly be free to take on different *real* or *imaginary* roles as different versions or perspectives of one self. One can use the feature of anonymity in a social media to totally separate out one's traditional roles (as a family member, an employee, colleague, a practitioner in a community, etc.) in brick-and-mortar situations from the freely-chosen and freely-expressed digital self (or selves). For the one that cannot afford to be truly authentic to oneself due to the roles that one has to play demanded in situations (either physical or digital), one can always take on another digital self to be authentic in a different manner. Social media allows for the experimental "living-ins" (e.g., digital living-in the social interactions among video game players) that such living-ins can serve as fantasy lives of self or even the blueprints of future physical living-ins as the experimental "living-ins" can deliver quicker, and not-in-reality consequences.



To further answer the question whether or not authenticity is a black-and-white, either-or trait, or a trait on a sliding scale, one on the path of being an authentic self and authentic being should have a definite *intent* for authenticity, and such an intent should never be swayed away from the extreme end of the spectrum of having authenticity. One's decisions, actions, and the consequences of these decisions and actions may not always be authentic due to the self's habitual patterns and the situational, cultural norms that consist somewhat inauthenticity. Often times, it is a tug-of-war between the self's satisfying the external somewhat-inauthentic demand of the situation and self's withholding the internal, consistent intent for authenticity. It is simply hoped that the gap between the external somewhat-inauthentic demand from the situation and the internal wishful-ness for authenticity gets narrower. For example, if a person's authenticity is to be a good person that causes no harm to others, then telling a white lie with the intent to protect others' feelings for good reasons, then even though on the factual level the message is inauthentic, the decision and action is internally authentic.

Social media, if constructed as an authentic context through providing and systematical refining its structures to offer the right situation for the freedom of expression of authentic self and authentic being as well as allowing for long-term self and others' reflection on their authenticity, can encourage the use of social media. Hence, this leads to the following proposition:

***P5:** Technology, if constructed as an authentic context through systematic restructuring and allowing for long-term self and others' reflection, can mediate between perceived authenticity and the use of technology (such as social media).*

## Discussion

There are few information systems research that has studied the relationships between authenticity and technology use. This paper extends the existing theoretic framework of Pallud and Straub (2007) with a further examination of authenticity in the three dimensions of self, being and context. Such a further examination into the three dimensions refines the moderating and mediating effects of authenticity on the use of technology. In addition, the quality disposition construct based on the Theory of Quality (Dewey, 1960) is also added to moderate the relationship between the perceived authenticity and technology use. This framework is proposed under the example and discussion of social media, but the framework itself can be applied in other types of technology as well.

Besides the theoretical contribution, the managerial contribution is to guide the development of an authentic context, as a means to encourage and enhance technology use. Social media requires a refinement of its governance and control structure to increase its contextual authenticity. This is a challenge due to the need for real-time governance and control and the pervasiveness of the technology.

This research does not include all the constructs in the framework of Pallud and Straub (2007). It also needs to further develop the measurements for the proposed constructs and relationships. Future research may include other factors and relationships and provide instruments for measurement.

## Conclusion

This research proposes a new theoretical model for studying the relationships between authenticity and technology, using social media as an exemplary technology. In employing the existentialist's view of authenticity and Dewey's theory of quality, we extend in the framework of Pallud and Straub (2007) by refining the two constructs of perceived authenticity and authenticity disposition with the introduction of three dimensions of authenticity (in self, being and context) and by adding a new construct of quality disposition. We outline five propositions for studying the relationships between authenticity and technology use. We suggest that one needs to understand authenticity first internally for the self, and then, seek the deeper meanings of authenticity in being through the interactions with others, and of authenticity in context through situational possibilities. Social media are not fundamentally different from traditional media; they only add some features that may or may not help in the search of authenticity. Whether or not there is authenticity in social media is a question to self, self's relations to others, and to

the social media's structure as a context. Social media are tools, which could be applied to inject structures and mechanisms to assist in the self-initiated efforts of seeking and enhancing authenticity.

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