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# Power as an Emotional Liability: Implications for Perceived Authenticity and Trust After a Transgression

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People may express a variety of emotions after committing a transgression. Through 6 empirical studies and a meta-analysis, we investigate how the perceived authenticity of such emotional displays and resulting levels of trust are shaped by the transgressor's power. Past findings suggest that individuals with power tend to be more authentic because they have more freedom to act on the basis of their own personal inclinations. Yet, our findings reveal that (a) a transgressor's display of emotion is perceived to be less authentic when that party's power is high rather than low; (b) this perception of emotional authenticity, in turn, directly influences (and mediates) the level of trust in that party; and (c) perceivers ultimately exert less effort when asked to make a case for leniency toward high rather than low-power transgressors. This tendency to discount the emotional authenticity of the powerful was found to arise from power increasing the transgressor's perceived level of emotional control and strategic motivation, rather than a host of alternative mechanisms. These results were also found across different types of emotions (sadness, anger, fear, happiness, and neutral), expressive modalities, operationalizations of the transgression, and participant populations. Altogether, our findings demonstrate that besides the wealth of benefits power can afford, it also comes with a notable downside. The findings, furthermore, extend past research on perceived emotional authenticity, which has focused on how and when specific emotions are expressed, by revealing how this perception can depend on considerations that have nothing to do with the expression itself.

*Keywords:* trust, emotion, power, authenticity, perception

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Research suggests that those who attain positions of power tend to be more emotionally skilled (Côté, Lopes, Salovey, & Miners, 2010; George, 2000). Indeed, it is the very possession of such skills that has been suggested to help these parties attain and succeed in leadership positions (e.g., Lewis, 2000; Rubin, Munz,

& Bommer, 2005). Yet, this tendency for the powerful to be emotionally skilled may not necessarily prove beneficial, to the extent that those evaluating such powerful individuals subscribe to this notion as well, and may even undermine the effectiveness of high-power parties' emotional expressions when they might need them most. In particular, through six empirical studies and a meta-analysis, we investigate the possibility that perceivers' general beliefs about the powerful as emotionally skilled would lead perceivers to discount the authenticity of the emotions the powerful express, and that this would ultimately impair the effectiveness of those emotional displays for addressing a transgression.

## Theoretical Background

*Power*, which has been defined as an individual's capacity to modify others' states by providing or withholding resources or administering punishments (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003), has been widely recognized to offer numerous benefits to those who possess it, including the ability to act based on one's own inclinations, perceive greater choice, and obtain greater benefits from both work and nonwork interactions (e.g., Galinsky,

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Gruenfeld, & Magee, 2003; Keltner et al., 2003; Kim, Pinkley, & Fragale, 2005; Van Kleef & Côté, 2007). However, with regard to the implications of power for the perception of emotional authenticity, the literature is less than clear. On the one hand, evidence suggests that, relative to those with low-power, high-power individuals feel greater freedom to express themselves and hence tend to be more authentic (Hecht & LaFrance, 1998; Kifer, Heller, Perunovic, Galinsky, & Galinsky, 2013; Kraus, Chen, & Keltner, 2011; Van Kleef, Homan, Finkenauer, Gundemir, & Stamkou, 2011). Thus, to the extent that this greater freedom to be authentic entails that an emotion would be more clearly expressed (Gross, 1998a; Hochschild, 1979) and this, in turn, affects how genuine it is perceived to be (e.g., Ekman, Sorenson, & Friesen, 1969), one might presume that the powerful would generally be perceived to be more emotionally authentic than those with less power.

However, evidence also suggests that the perception of emotional authenticity can depend on more than the physiological characteristics of the expression itself. It can also depend on the consistency of such expressions with perceivers' beliefs about when such expressions would occur. Maringer and colleagues (2011), for example, found that when other means of gauging an emotion were inhibited, an expresser's smile was perceived to be more genuine in a context in which true smiles would be expected than in a context where the likelihood of a true smile was ambiguous. Likewise, Campellone and Kring (2013) observed that perceivers tended to discount displays of anger and happiness that were incongruent with the expresser's behavior. Moreover, ten Brinke and Adams (2015) found that the expression of emotion by a company representative that was normatively inconsistent with what perceivers would expect after a transgression (i.e., happiness) was considered less sincere than a normatively consistent emotion (i.e., sadness).

Yet, by focusing on the implications of how and when specific expressions would occur, these streams of research seem to have paid less attention to the possibility that perceptions of emotional authenticity may be influenced more broadly, in ways that could hold regardless of the expression that is shown. In this regard, we suggest that power may play this kind of broader role, by affecting perceptions of emotional authenticity in a manner that has more to do with perceivers' expectations about the expresser than the expression itself. That is, we contend that although past research on perceived emotional authenticity has generally been based on the notion that such perceptions hinge on perceivers' expectations of what the expression should be, the potential bases of such perceiver expectations should be broadened in scope. These expectations may certainly concern physiological characteristics of the expression (e.g., Ekman et al., 1969), or considerations of when such expressions should be displayed (Campellone & Kring, 2013; Maringer et al., 2011; ten Brinke & Adams, 2015). However, perceivers may also hold expectations about how different types of people are likely to engage in emotional displays, which may affect how those perceivers evaluate such expressions as well (Van Kleef, 2016). More specifically, given that those who attain positions of power in organizations tend to be more emotionally skilled (Côté et al., 2010; George, 2000), we suggest that perceivers may also come to expect such emotional capabilities in the powerful. If so, this may in turn lead those perceivers to question whether emotional displays by the powerful are truly genuine, and

thus consider such displays to be less authentic when the expresser's power is high (rather than low).

This possibility may, furthermore, warrant particular attention in cases where the expresser has committed a transgression, for at least three reasons. First, contexts where transgressions have occurred can raise the need to address such incidents (e.g., Bottom, Gibson, Daniels, & Murnighan, 2002; Desmet, De Cremer, & Van Dijk, 2011; Kim, Ferrin, Cooper, & Dirks, 2004), and thereby represent situations where emotional expressions might readily be used. Second, evidence suggests that the emotional expressions of others may take on heightened importance after a transgression, as such incidents raise concerns about how the transgressor would behave in the future, by providing information about the transgressor's sentiments and intentions (Van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2010). Finally, differences in the kind of information such responses might convey have been found to affect how transgressors are subsequently viewed and treated (e.g., Ferrin, Kim, Cooper, & Dirks, 2007). In such cases, perceivers may not only pay greater attention to the transgressor's emotional expressions, but also engage in deeper considerations of why these expressions are being used, and this latter assessment may ultimately depend on the transgressor's level of power.

More specifically, power can be theorized to influence two key phenomena: (a) perceptions of individuals' ability to control their emotions and (b) preconceptions about the extent to which individuals would display emotions for strategic purposes, as we discuss in turn. The notion that the powerful tend to be more emotionally skilled than those with less power concerns not just their ability to appraise emotions, but also to control their emotions proactively (George, 2000). Thus, by expecting the powerful to be more emotionally skilled, they should also be perceived to possess greater emotional control (i.e., the degree to which individuals can influence which emotions they generate, the occasions when they do so, and the manner in which these emotions are experienced and expressed; Gross, 1998b). And if this perception of greater emotional control, in turn, raises concerns about whether the emotional expressions of the powerful are manipulated, rather than a natural response to the situation, this should ultimately lower the perceived authenticity of such displays.

Likewise, power may increase not only a party's perceived ability to control emotions, but also their perceived motivation to do so. This is not only because those with power typically receive greater benefits from their interactions than those with less power (Blau, 1964; Kim & Fragale, 2005; Pfeffer, 1981) and may thus have more to lose if such relationships were damaged, but also because power has been associated with greater attention to rewards and greater inclinations to pursue them (Keltner et al., 2003). To the extent that this is the case, and perceivers are aware of such tendencies, they may expect expressers to have greater strategic motivation to express emotions (i.e., due to a concern with increasing the net benefits from their interactions) when the expresser's power is high rather than low. And if this greater perceived strategic motivation, in turn, raises concerns about whether the emotional expressions of the powerful are instrumental, rather than a natural response to the situation, this should ultimately lower the perceived authenticity of such displays.

In sum, we suggest that beliefs regarding the emotional capabilities of the powerful may represent a double-edged sword. On the one hand, emotional competence is often assumed to be an

essential trait for those who wish to succeed in positions of power. Yet, this very assumption may also foster the belief that the powerful would be better able to control their emotions and/or be more inclined to display them strategically relative to others. If so, and if such beliefs would lower perceived emotional authenticity, one might expect that emotional expressions would generally be perceived to be less authentic when the expresser's power is high than low and that this effect of power on perceived emotional authenticity would be mediated by the degree to which that party is believed to possess emotional control and strategic motivation (see Figure 1).

*Hypothesis 1:* A displayed emotion will be perceived to be less authentic when the expresser's power is high rather than low.

*Hypothesis 2a:* The effect of power on perceived emotional authenticity will be mediated by the expresser's perceived level of emotional control.

*Hypothesis 2b:* The effect of power on perceived emotional authenticity will be mediated by the expresser's perceived level of strategic motivation.

### Implications for Trust

Moreover, to the extent that power affects the perception of emotional authenticity, this may in turn influence perceivers' level of trust, which has been defined as a psychological state comprising the willingness to accept vulnerability based on positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998). More specifically, evidence suggests that because emotional displays have the potential to signal the expresser's attitudes, relational orientation, and behavioral intentions, they can ultimately affect our willingness to trust (Van Kleef, 2016). Yet studies have also found that such expressions exert a greater influence on others when they are considered genuine than strategic (Kopelman, Rosette, & Thompson, 2006; Thompson & Kim, 2000) and that the perception of emotions as inauthentic can actually undermine trust (Côté, Hideg, & Van Kleef, 2013). Hence, we expect that the implications of power for an expresser's perceived emotional authenticity would in turn directly influence trust in that party, such that this perceived emotional authenticity would mediate the effect of power on trust.

*Hypothesis 3:* Perceived emotional authenticity will directly influence trust.

*Hypothesis 4:* Perceived emotional authenticity will mediate the effect of power on trust.

In this regard, it is critical to note that this mechanism through which power is predicted to affect trust differs from what has previously been proposed in the trust repair literature. Although that literature has already observed that power can impair trust, its focus has been on how this can occur due to power increasing the perception of a party's control and hence responsibility for its transgressions (Fragale, Rosen, Xu, & Merideth, 2009; Kim, Dirks, & Cooper, 2009; Overbeck, Tiedens, & Brion, 2006; ten Brinke & Adams, 2015), and thus largely ignores the potential for perceptions of emotional authenticity to play a role. Indeed, the only study that appears to have considered the implications of both power and emotional authenticity for how transgressors are viewed depicted power as something that would simply moderate the need to express a normatively appropriate emotion when apologizing for such incidents (i.e., sadness rather than happiness; ten Brinke & Adams, 2015). That is, they treated power simply as a boundary condition for the well-established notion that emotional expressions are perceived to be less authentic when they are inconsistent with what perceivers expect to be displayed (Campellone & Kring, 2013; Maringer et al., 2011), by observing that normatively inconsistent expressions lowered perceived emotional authenticity when the expresser's power was high, but not when it was low. As such, neither this nor any other research we could find has assessed the more fundamental possibility that power might directly impair the extent to which emotional authenticity can be conveyed and that it is this implication, rather than attributions of responsibility, that might affect one's ability to address a transgression.

We will, therefore, investigate this possibility by making it explicit that the transgressor was fully responsible for the transgression in each of our studies (i.e., to control for the potential implications of power for responsibility that the trust repair literature has already documented) and evaluating whether power would still affect trust through perceived emotional authenticity. By doing so, we seek to broaden the literature's understanding of how power can affect not only the perception of emotional authenticity, but also trust by supporting an entirely different pathway through which this can occur, one that operates regardless of the expression's normative consistency or the level of responsibility transgressors are perceived to hold. Moreover, unlike the trust repair literature, whose consideration of emotional displays has generally been limited to those that might signal regret (Dirks, Kim, Ferrin, & Cooper, 2011), our theoretical reasoning suggests

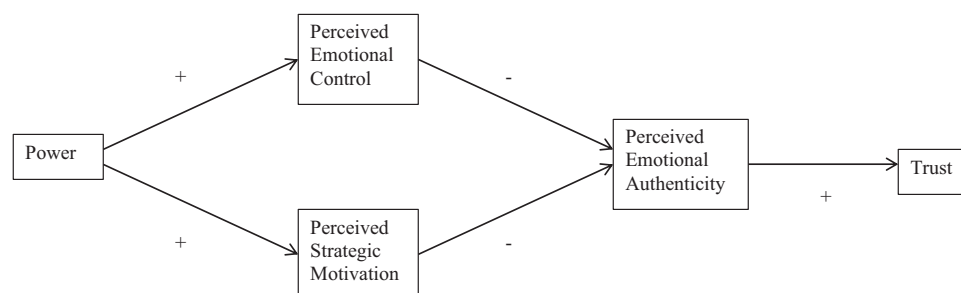


Figure 1. Theoretical model.

that power would actually affect the perceived authenticity of any emotion a party might express and that such concerns would be sufficient to reduce trust in that party. Hence, we test our predictions not only with sadness but also with several other emotions.

### Research Overview

We investigate these predictions with six main studies and a meta-analysis. Studies 1 and 2 focus on perceptions of five visually differentiable, basic emotions with increasingly rich media to test the robustness and generalizability of our findings. Study 1 uses age-adjusted photographs of the high or low-power individual expressing the target emotions, whereas Study 2 replaces the photographs with videos of an actor who was hired to express the emotions of the individual responding to the incident. Then, having established the generalizability of these effects across different types of emotions, Studies 3 and 4 focus on further validating the mediating role played by emotional control and strategic motivation, respectively, by directly manipulating rather than just measuring these mechanisms. Next, Studies 5 and 6 further test the robustness and generalizability of our findings by examining whether the perceived authenticity of a real public figure facing a scandal would vary based on the perceived positional power of that individual. These latter studies differ in terms of whether the transgression concerned a loss of life (Study 5) or a callous remark (Study 6), as well as whether the response was accompanied by a factual claim, made the emotion explicit, and the type of power cues the videos conveyed. Study 6 also includes a behavioral measure by assessing the amount of effort perceivers subsequently exert when asked to make a case for leniency toward the transgressor. Finally, Study 7 reports a meta-analysis to assess the robustness of our findings across our main studies.

### Study 1

We first sought to test our predictions with a number of visually differentiable, basic emotions (anger, fear, sadness, happiness, neutral) based on the work of Ekman and colleagues (1969) using a combination of scenarios and photographs. This experiment asked participants to a) read about an employee who expressed one of these emotions after having been caught falsifying details in a report that led to financial penalties for the firm, (b) view a photograph of the employee expressing that emotion, and then (c) rate their perceptions of emotional authenticity and trust in that party. Study 1, thus, involved a 2 (power: high vs. low)  $\times$  5 (emotion: anger, fear, sadness, happiness, neutral) between-

subjects design, with participants randomly assigned to one of the 10 experimental conditions.

### Method

**Participants.** Participants ( $N = 512$ ; 180 female) from the United States were recruited through Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) and were each paid \$.50 to complete the study. We chose MTurk, an online community in which individuals complete work in return for monetary compensation, because it is more diverse than a typical American college sample and thus enhances the generalizability of our results (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). Participants averaged 32.96 years in age (ranging from 19 to 73 years,  $SD = 10.27$ ).

**Manipulations.** Ten versions of the vignette were crafted in accordance with our 2  $\times$  5 experimental design (see Appendix A).

**Power.** The power of the transgressor was framed as being either high or low. In the high-power condition, the focal employee, John, was described as a "CEO" who has access to valuable information and has power to reward or punish subordinates. In the low-power condition, John was described as a "junior staff member" who lacks access to valuable information and who is subordinate to a supervisor who has power to reward or punish him.

**Emotion.** The employee was described as expressing one of five different emotions at a company meeting following this transgression: anger, fear, sadness, happiness, or neutral. We then provided a color image representing one of the five discrete emotions from a validated and standardized set of filmed emotion expressions, the Amsterdam Dynamic Facial Expression Set (ADFES; Van der Schalk, Hawk, Fischer, & Doosje, 2011). A professional computer graphics artist was employed to alter the images we used from the ADFES so the expresser appeared closer to middle-aged, to heighten the plausibility that this person could fill either the high or low-power role and thus enable us to provide the exact same image for each expression across the high- and low-power conditions (see Figure 2).

**Manipulation checks.** Participants were asked three questions that assessed whether the manipulations were successful. These questions were asked directly after participants viewed the photograph in order to make the emotional expression more salient to the respondent. Our first two questions tested whether they recognized the employee's positional power as high or low. We asked respondents, "In the scenario you read, how would you describe John's level/position in the firm?" with the options to select "John holds a high-powered level/position in the firm" or

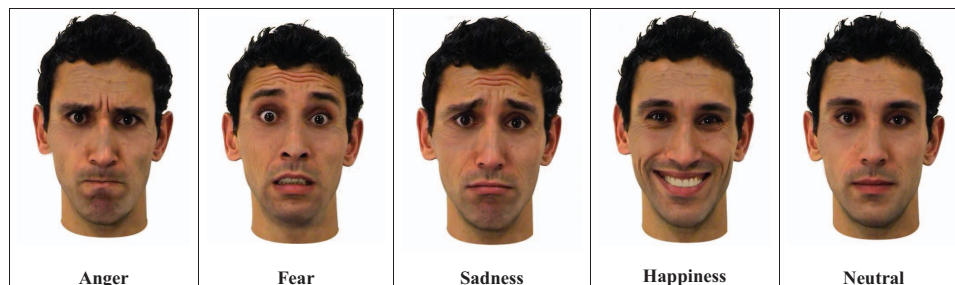


Figure 2. Photos (Study 1). See the online article for the color version of this figure.

“John holds a low-powered level/position in the firm.” The next question asked, “In the scenario you read, how would you describe John’s level/position in the firm?” and was rated on a 5-point Likert scale with options ranging from *very high-powered* to “*very low-powered*.” Our third question assessed whether respondents recognized the emotion, by asking, “Which emotion did John display following his transgression?” Response options included anger, fear, sadness, happiness, neutral.

#### Dependent measures.

**Emotional authenticity.** Nine items were used to assess perceived emotional authenticity (see Appendix A). This scale was based in part on a measure of emotional authenticity used by Grandey and colleagues (Grandey, Fisk, Mattila, Jansen, & Sideman, 2005) but also included some additional items. Items included statements such as (a) “John is probably faking how he feels” (reverse-scored), (b) “John’s emotional display is probably strategic” (reverse-scored), and (c) “Overall, I would say that this emotion expression is probably real.” Participants rated these items on 7-point Likert scales (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*;  $\alpha = .97$ ).

**Trust.** Four items were used to measure trust, adapted from Kim et al. (2004): (a) “I would feel comfortable working with John in the future”; (b) “I would feel comfortable with John working on a similar task in the future without oversight”; (c) “If I worked with John again, I would keep my eye on him” (reverse-scored); (d) “If I had a choice, I wouldn’t let John have any influence over issues that are important to me” (reverse-scored). Participants rated these items on 7-point Likert scales (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*;  $\alpha = .85$ ).

#### Mediating mechanisms.

**Emotional control.** Four items were used to measure perceptions of the expresser’s ability to control their emotions: (a) “People at this level/position have a greater ability to be strategic about their expressions,” (b) “I expect people at this level/position to be good at controlling their expressions in public,” (c) “John is probably capable of controlling his expressions,” and (d) “People at this level/position are usually very good at controlling their expressions.” Participants rated these items on 7-point Likert scales (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*;  $\alpha = .79$ ).

**Strategic motivation.** Four items were used to assess the extent to which the expresser would display emotions for strategic purposes. We asked respondents to rate the following items: (a) “John is expressing this emotion to get something for himself,” (b) “John has ulterior motives for expressing this emotion,” (c) “John is expressing this emotion for personal gain,” and (d) “By expressing this emotion John will be able to minimize the consequences for his transgression” on 7-point Likert scales (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*;  $\alpha = .93$ ).

**Alternative emotion-related mechanisms.** We also assessed three additional emotion-related mechanisms to gauge their ability to provide alternative explanations for the predicted effects: (a) the extent to which the expresser would have more situational constraints on the types of expressions they might use (labeled “More Strings Attached”;  $\alpha = .88$ ), (b) how typical it would be for someone at that level/position in the company to express that emotion (labeled “Typicality”;  $\alpha = .84$ ), and (c) the extent to which the expression was appropriate for the expresser to display (labeled “Appropriateness”;  $\alpha = .93$ ). Each of these mechanisms was assessed with a three-item, 7-point Likert scale (see Appendix

A), and we ultimately rule out their ability to provide alternative explanations for our findings in the Study 7 meta-analysis.

## Pilot Study

We, furthermore, ran a separate pilot study with an entirely different sample of subjects to assess whether the predicted effects of power could be attributed to a number of other potential mechanisms. Specifically, we sought to rule out the possibility that power might affect perceived emotional authenticity by affecting perceivers’ (a) liking of the transgressor, (b) assessments of warmth, (c) positive or negative affect, (d) attributions of responsibility, (e) perceived competence, or (f) trust, as opposed to perceivers’ a priori expectations of the transgressor’s emotional control and strategic motivation (see Appendix A).<sup>1</sup> To do so, we paid 100 MTurk participants (37 female) from the United States \$.50 to read the vignette from Study 1 in two phases.

The first phase of the pretest exposed participants to Study 1’s power manipulation without any reference to an emotional expression (i.e., by removing the last sentence of the vignette) to gauge whether power would exert any direct effects on these alternative mechanisms and, thus, potentially operate through such mechanisms to affect how subsequent perceptions of emotional authenticity are derived. The second phase of the pretest then added the written portion of Study 1’s emotion manipulation (i.e., the last sentence of the vignette referring to the emotion expressed), without exposing participants to the actual emotional display, to gauge how power would affect participants’ a priori expectations about the transgressor’s emotional control and strategic motivation for the expression (i.e., without observing the expression itself).

The results revealed no direct effects of power on liking ( $p = .36$ ), warmth ( $p = .71$ ), positive affect ( $p = .24$ ), negative affect ( $p = .34$ ), perceived responsibility ( $p = .37$ ), or trust<sup>2</sup> ( $p = .54$ ), and a significant effect on perceived competence in the opposite direction to what would have occurred if perceived competence could explain our predictions ( $M_{\text{low-power}} = 2.18$ ,  $SD = .63$ ;  $M_{\text{high-power}} = 3.15$ ,  $SD = .92$ ;  $t(98) = -6.21$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In contrast, power was found to exert strong direct effects on participants’ expectations of the expresser’s emotional control ( $M_{\text{low-power}} = 3.21$ ,  $SD = .71$ ;  $M_{\text{high-power}} = 4.05$ ,  $SD = .76$ ,  $t(98) = -5.69$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and strategic motivation ( $M_{\text{low-power}} = 3.74$ ,  $SD = .92$ ;  $M_{\text{high-power}} = 4.23$ ,  $SD = .70$ ;  $t(98) = -3.00$ ,  $p = .003$ ) prior to any actual emotion appraisal, consistent with the notion that these expectations about the expresser would precede (and hence potentially drive) the perceived authenticity of the expression itself.

## Results

**Preliminary assessments.** A majority of participants ( $n = 484$ ; 94.5%) accurately identified the transgressor’s level of power, and 414 (81%) accurately identified the transgressor’s

<sup>1</sup> That is, we assessed whether power would directly influence trust in the absence of an emotional expression, as opposed to affecting trust through an expression’s perceived emotional authenticity.

emotional expression.<sup>2</sup> We dropped those who did not answer these questions correctly from the sample. Removing them from the sample did not change the direction of the results, but enhanced their significance in some cases. A table of exclusions by condition for each study is provided in [Appendix B](#), and potential concerns about such exclusions are ruled out in the Study 7 meta-analysis. In the final sample, participants assigned to the high-power condition perceived the employee as having significantly higher power ( $M = 4.27$ ,  $SD = .51$ ) than those assigned to the low-power condition ( $M = 1.31$ ,  $SD = .49$ ),  $t(386) = 57.77$ ,  $p < .001$ . The final sample included three hundred and 89 subjects (133 female), with a mean age of 33.46 (ranging from 19 to 73 years,  $SD = 10.24$ ), and 61.4% of the participants possessing a 2-year college degree or higher. By using an alpha of .05, final sample sizes of approximately 40 per condition, and [Cohen's \(1988\)](#) power analysis guidelines for small, medium, and large effect sizes, the statistical power for this study would be 0.64, 0.95, and 1.00, respectively. [Table 1](#) reports the means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of the study variables. [Table 2](#) reports the means, standard deviations, observations, and significance levels by condition.

We conducted a principal components analysis (with direct oblimin rotation) with the measures of perceived emotional control, perceived strategic motivation, and perceived emotional authenticity to gauge whether they represent three distinct constructs. This analysis provided support for a three-factor structure ( $\lambda_1 = 9.90$ ,  $\lambda_2 = 2.21$ ,  $\lambda_3 = 1.04$ , 77.40% variance explained), in which each of the three predicted factors exhibited an eigenvalue greater than 1. This confirms that these scales can be empirically distinguished.

We also assessed whether the predicted effects of power (coded in this and all subsequent analyses for each study as 0 = *low*, 1 = *high*) would differ by emotion (coded as a categorical variable) or generalize across them, as our theory suggests, by searching for evidence of a power  $\times$  emotion interaction. We found no significant interaction between the power manipulation and the type of emotion expression in an analysis of variance (ANOVA) predicting emotional authenticity,  $F(4, 379) = .37$ ,  $p = .83$ . This indicates that the implications of power did not depend on the specific type of emotion that was expressed. Hence, although we also report significance tests for each emotion separately in [Table 2](#), we collapsed the data across the five emotions for the hypothesis tests.

**Hypothesis tests.** Hypothesis 1 predicted that power would lower perceived emotional authenticity. Consistent with that prediction, perceived authenticity was significantly lower when the expresser's power was high ( $M = 3.20$ ,  $SD = 1.68$ ) than when it was low ( $M = 3.85$ ,  $SD = 1.67$ ),  $t(387) = -3.79$ ,  $p < .001$ . Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

Hypothesis 2a and 2b predicted that the effect of power on perceived emotional authenticity would be mediated by the expresser's perceived level of emotional control and strategic motivation, respectively. Power was positively related to trustee's perceived emotional control ( $B = 1.05$ ,  $SE = .10$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and perceived emotional control was negatively related to perceived emotional authenticity ( $B = -.46$ ,  $SE = .08$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Likewise, power was positively related to trustees' perceived strategic motivation ( $B = .73$ ,  $SE = .17$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and perceived strategic motivation was negatively related to perceived emotional authenticity ( $B = -.78$ ,  $SE = .03$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Moreover, although

perceived emotional control and strategic motivation were not both found to mediate the effect of power on perceived emotional authenticity when they were modeled simultaneously as parallel independent mechanisms for that relationship, support for both mediators was found when they were modeled sequentially.<sup>3</sup> Specifically, a bootstrapped mediation analysis revealed a significant indirect effect whereby the transgressor's power affected perceptions of that party's emotional control, which in turn affected perceptions of that party's motivation to use emotions strategically, which then affected perceptions of that party's emotional authenticity (95% bias corrected CI [-.66, -.29]). Thus, perceived emotional control and strategic motivation were each found to play a mediating role in the effect of power on perceived emotional authenticity, supporting Hypotheses 2a and 2b.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that perceived emotional authenticity would directly influence trust, and this prediction was supported ( $B = .10$ ,  $SE = .03$ ,  $p = .001$ ). Finally, Hypothesis 4 predicted that perceived emotional authenticity would mediate the effect of power on trust. A bootstrapped mediation analysis indicated that power exerted a significant indirect effect on trust that was mediated through perceived emotional authenticity (95% bias corrected CI [-.12, -.02]). Thus, Hypothesis 4 was supported.

**Supplementary analyses.** We also sought to obtain further insight into these causal relationships by including all of these constructs in the same mediation model. Consistent with the sequential mediation pattern observed when evaluating Hypotheses 2a and 2b, a bootstrapped mediation analysis revealed a significant indirect effect whereby the transgressor's power affected perceptions of that party's emotional control, which in turn affected perceptions of that party's motivation to use emotions strategically, which then affected perceptions of that transgressor's emotional authenticity, and ultimately affected perceivers' trust in that party (95% bias corrected CI [-0.13, -0.02]) (see [Figure 3](#)). No other causal sequence was supported.

## Discussion

The results from this study provide strong support for our predictions. First, they support the prediction that displays of emotion would be considered less authentic when the expresser's power is high than when it is low. The findings also support predictions that perceived emotional authenticity would in turn directly influence trust, and that it would ultimately mediate the

<sup>2</sup> The emotion recognition rates for this study, as well as the other studies in this article that involve selecting the emotion from multiple alternatives, are all within a few percentage points of what has typically been observed in classic and more recent emotion studies ([Ekman et al., 1987](#); [Ekman et al., 1969](#); [Tracy & Robins, 2008](#)). Rather than reflect widespread shortcomings in the nature of such emotion manipulations, this somewhat lower accuracy may be attributed to the fact that people differ in their ability to recognize emotions ([Momm et al., 2015](#)) as well as the fact that identifying the correct emotion among as many as five emotion options is more difficult than simpler manipulation checks. Given these considerations, dropping participants from our studies who failed to identify these emotions accurately seemed prudent.

<sup>3</sup> Bootstrap mediation analyses in each study were conducted using [Hayes' \(2012\) PROCESS Model 6](#) (with 5,000 samples) for the sequential analyses and [PROCESS Model 4](#) (with 5,000 samples) for all others. Results for the simultaneous mediation model, as well as for each mediator on its own, are reported in the online supplement for each of our main studies.

Table 1  
Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations (Study 1)

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. Power (0 = low, 1 = high)	.53	.50				
2. Emotional authenticity	3.51	1.71	-.19**			
3. Trust	2.17	1.05	-.03	.17**		
4. Emotional control	4.90	1.16	.45**	-.33**	-.18**	
5. Strategic motivation	4.44	1.66	.22**	-.77**	-.1	.41**

\*\*  $p < .01$ .

effect of power on trust. Finally, this study provides insight into the mechanisms underlying these effects. Specifically, these results (along with the results from the additional pilot study) support the notion that the effect of power on perceived emotional authenticity is mediated by the expresser's perceived emotional control and strategic motivation (rather than a range of alternative mechanisms, such as liking, warmth, perceivers' positive or negative affect, perceived responsibility, perceived competence, or trust<sup>2</sup>). Indeed, this study also helps clarify the nature of the full causal sequence by suggesting that power increases perceived emotional control, which in turn increases that party's perceived motivation to use emotions strategically, and hence decreases their perceived emotional authenticity, and ultimately lowers trust in that party. This empirical model not only supports our theoretical reasoning, which already predicted most of the relationships in this causal chain, but also raises the notion that perceived emotional control and perceived strategic motivation may be causally related as well (i.e., such that those who are perceived to have greater emotional control will be expected to have greater motivation to use emotional expressions for strategic purposes).

### Study 2

Study 2 was designed not only to replicate Study 1's findings using the same set of basic emotions, but also to extend them in four ways. First, to ensure that the results were not limited to how we had operationalized the transgression, we altered the vignette to refer to the employee as having clearly falsified major details in a "client contract" rather than a "company report" and described the transgression as leading to some significant "legal troubles" for the firm rather than "financial penalties." We also sought to validate our findings with a set of even richer emotion stimuli by replacing the photos from Study 1 with videos of an actor we hired to

express each of the target emotions while making a brief statement about the transgression. Third, given that the empirical model found in Study 1 (see Figure 3) is not only consistent with our theoretical predictions, but also helps clarify the nature of the full causal sequence, we sought to replicate support for that model as well. Finally, we sought to test our findings with an entirely different participant population. As with the prior study, Study 2 implemented a 2 (power: high vs. low)  $\times$  5 (emotion: anger, fear, sadness, happiness, neutral) between-subjects design with participants randomly assigned to one of the 10 conditions.

### Method

**Participants.** Participants were 486 undergraduate students (290 female) from a private university in the western part of the United States who took part in this study in exchange for course credit. Participants averaged 20.84 years in age (ranging from 17 to 49 years,  $SD = 2.38$ ).

**Manipulations.** Ten versions of the vignette were crafted in accordance with our 2  $\times$  5 experimental design. We used the same vignette as in Study 1 with the aforementioned edits to alter the nature of the transgression. This vignette was then followed by a video of the following script that was read by an actor expressing the target emotion:

Hello everyone. I am here to speak to you about what happened with the client contract issue, to provide more details about the incident, and to discuss any other questions or concerns you might have about what occurred. I would have to say I'm feeling quite [*angry/fraid/sad/happy/neutral*] right now. But to start this off, I should probably begin by offering my own account of what went wrong and why, before trying to answer anything else you might want to ask.

Table 2  
Means and Standard Deviations for Emotional Authenticity by Condition (Study 1)

Emotion	Low power			High power			Paired comparisons
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	
Anger	4.85 <sub>a</sub>	1.46	25	3.85 <sub>a</sub>	1.67	32	$t(55) = 2.378, p = .021$
Fear	4.79 <sub>a</sub>	1.51	48	4.18 <sub>a</sub>	1.74	50	$t(96) = 1.839, p = .069$
Sadness	2.80 <sub>b</sub>	1.51	36	2.20 <sub>b</sub>	1.30	43	$t(77) = 1.889, p = .063$
Happiness	3.44 <sub>bc</sub>	1.49	39	2.77 <sub>b</sub>	1.51	43	$t(80) = 2.026, p = .046$
Neutral	3.36 <sub>c</sub>	1.33	34	3.00 <sub>b</sub>	1.36	39	$t(71) = 1.151, p = .253$
All emotions	3.85	1.67	182	3.20	1.68	207	$t(387) = 3.790, p < .001$

*Note.* Subscripts indicate whether emotional authenticity differs significantly by emotion within each power category. In each column, mean values with the same subscript do not significantly differ from each other.



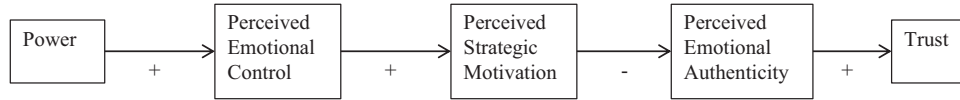


Figure 3. Empirical model.

**Measures.** Participants responded to the same three manipulation check questions, and the same measures of perceived emotional authenticity ( $\alpha = .94$ ), trust ( $\alpha = .83$ ), emotional control ( $\alpha = .78$ ), and strategic motivation ( $\alpha = .80$ ) as in Study 1, along with the same three alternative emotion-related mechanisms from that study (i.e., typicality [ $\alpha = .85$ ], more strings attached [ $\alpha = .87$ ], and appropriateness [ $\alpha = .90$ ]).

**Results**

**Preliminary assessments.** A majority of participants ( $n = 455$ ; 93.6%) accurately identified the transgressor’s power, and 425 (87.4%) accurately identified the emotional expression. We again dropped those who did not answer these questions correctly from the sample (see Appendix B). Removing them from the sample did not affect support for our predictions. The final sample included 400 participants (246 female), with a mean age of 20.74 (ranging from 17 to 49 years,  $SD = 2.41$ ), and 26.6% of them possessed a 2-year college degree or higher. By using an alpha of .05, final sample sizes of approximately 40 per condition, and Cohen’s (1988) power analysis guidelines for small, medium, and large effect sizes, the statistical power for this study would be .65, .95, and 1.00, respectively. Table 3 reports the means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of the study variables. Table 4 reports the means, standard deviations, number of observations, and significance levels by condition.

We conducted a principal components analysis (with direct oblimin rotation) with the measures of perceived emotional control, perceived strategic motivation, and perceived emotional authenticity to gauge whether they represent three distinct constructs. This analysis provided support for a three-factor structure ( $\lambda_1 = 7.52$ ,  $\lambda_2 = 2.40$ ,  $\lambda_3 = 1.75$ , 68.67% variance explained), in which each of the three predicted factors exhibited an eigenvalue greater than 1. This confirms that these scales can be empirically distinguished.

We likewise assessed whether the predicted effects of power would differ by emotion or generalize across them, as our theory suggests, by searching for evidence of a power x emotion interaction. We found no significant interaction between the power manipulation and the type of emotion expression in an ANOVA predicting emotional authenticity,  $F(4, 389) = .22$ ,  $p = .93$ .

Hence, although we also report significance tests for each emotion separately in Table 4, we again collapsed the data across the five emotions for the hypothesis tests.

**Hypothesis tests.** Hypothesis 1 predicted that power would lower perceived emotional authenticity. Consistent with that prediction, perceived emotional authenticity was significantly lower when the expresser’s power was high ( $M = 3.35$ ,  $SD = 1.08$ ) than when it was low ( $M = 4.03$ ,  $SD = 1.22$ ),  $t(397) = 5.88$ ,  $p < .001$ . Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

Hypotheses 2a and 2b predicted that the effect of power on perceived emotional authenticity would be mediated by the expresser’s perceived level of emotional control and strategic motivation, respectively. Power was positively related to trustee’s perceived emotional control ( $B = 1.64$ ,  $SE = .09$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and perceived emotional control was negatively related to perceived emotional authenticity ( $B = -.17$ ,  $SE = .07$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Likewise, power was positively related to trustee’s perceived strategic motivation ( $B = .61$ ,  $SE = .11$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and perceived strategic motivation was negatively related to perceived emotional authenticity ( $B = -.48$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Moreover, although perceived emotional control and strategic motivation were not both found to mediate the effect of power on perceived emotional authenticity when they were modeled simultaneously as parallel independent mechanisms for that relationship, support for both mediators was found when they were modeled sequentially.<sup>3</sup> Specifically, a bootstrapped mediation analysis revealed a significant indirect effect whereby the transgressor’s power affected perceptions of that party’s emotional control, which in turn affected perceptions of that party’s motivation to use emotions strategically, which then affected perceptions of that party’s emotional authenticity (95% bias corrected CI [ $-.33$ ,  $-.08$ ]). Thus, perceived emotional control and strategic motivation were each found to play a mediating role in the effect of power on perceived emotional authenticity, supporting Hypotheses 2a and 2b.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that perceived emotional authenticity would directly influence trust, and this prediction was supported ( $B = .29$ ,  $SE = .04$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Finally, Hypothesis 4 predicted that perceived emotional authenticity would mediate the effect of power on trust. A bootstrapped mediation analysis indicated that power exerted a signif-

Table 3  
Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations (Study 2)

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Power (0 = low, 1 = high)	.52	.50				
2. Emotional authenticity	3.68	1.20	-.28**			
3. Trust	2.66	1.01	.03	.35**		
4. Emotional control	4.72	1.19	.69**	-.29**	-.06	
5. Strategic motivation	4.32	1.16	.26**	-.51**	-.21**	.31**

\*\*  $p < .01$ .

Table 4  
Means and Standard Deviations for Emotional Authenticity by Condition (Study 2)

Emotion	Low power			High power			Paired comparisons
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	
Anger	4.42 <sub>a</sub>	1.27	37	3.77 <sub>a</sub>	1.13	40	$t(75) = 2.382, p = .020$
Fear	4.61 <sub>a</sub>	1.15	43	3.77 <sub>a</sub>	1.12	41	$t(82) = 3.390, p = .001$
Sadness	3.60 <sub>b</sub>	1.21	36	2.94 <sub>b</sub>	.94	39	$t(73) = 2.623, p = .011$
Happiness	3.66 <sub>b</sub>	1.13	37	3.09 <sub>b</sub>	.89	42	$t(77) = 2.528, p = .014$
Neutral	3.75 <sub>b</sub>	1.01	39	3.20 <sub>b</sub>	1.05	45	$t(82) = 2.465, p = .016$
All emotions	4.03	1.22	192	3.35	1.08	207	$t(397) = 5.878, p < .001$

*Note.* Subscripts indicate whether emotional authenticity differs significantly by emotion within each power category. In each column, mean values with the same subscript do not significantly differ from each other.

icant indirect effect on trust through perceived emotional authenticity (95% bias corrected CI  $[-.33, -.13]$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 4 was supported.

**Supplementary analyses.** We also replicated support for the full mediation chain observed in Study 1. More specifically, a bootstrapped mediation analysis again revealed a significant indirect effect whereby the transgressor's power affected perceptions of that party's emotional control, which in turn affected perceptions of that party's motivation to use emotions strategically, which then affected perceptions of that transgressor's emotional authenticity, and ultimately affected perceivers' trust in that party (95% bias corrected CI  $[-0.11, -.02]$ ; see Figure 3). No other causal sequence was supported.

## Discussion

The results from Study 2 replicate, strengthen, and enhance the generalizability of our findings. Power was again found to lower perceived authenticity, which in turn directly influenced and ultimately mediated the effect of power on trust. The effect of power on perceived emotional authenticity was, furthermore, mediated by the expresser's perceived level of emotional control and strategic motivation. Moreover, evidence was again found for a particular form of sequential mediation whereby power increased perceived emotional control, which in turn increased that party's perceived motivation to use such emotions strategically, and hence decreased their perceived emotional authenticity, and ultimately lowered perceivers' trust in that party. Finally, these results were obtained with a different operationalization of the transgression, with videos rather than photos, and with a different type of participant population.

## Study 3

Taken together, Studies 1 and 2 provide clear and consistent support for the notion (across different types of emotions, as well as different types of emotion stimuli, operationalizations of the transgression, and participant populations) that emotional expressions are perceived to be less authentic when the expresser holds greater power and that this ultimately lowers trust in that party. Nevertheless, further confidence in the underlying causal mechanisms for these effects would be gained if the implications of emotional control and strategic motivation were assessed by manipulating, rather than simply measuring, these proposed mediators (Spencer, Zanna, & Fong, 2005). Studies 3 and 4 were,

therefore, designed to address this goal by experimentally manipulating emotional control and strategic motivation, respectively.

More specifically, given that the predicted effects were not found to depend on the type of emotion (as indicated by the means for each emotion in Study 1 [see Table 2], significant effects of power on perceived emotional authenticity for each emotion in Study 2 [see Table 4], and the lack of significant Power  $\times$  Emotion interaction effects in each of those studies), Study 3 focused on expressions of sadness, given how commonly this emotion tends to be conveyed by those who have committed a transgression (Dirks et al., 2011). Then, to validate the causal role played by emotional control, Study 3 used the sadness video from Study 2 and manipulated not only the expresser's power, but also that party's ability to control emotions, with a 2 (power: high vs. low)  $\times$  2 (emotional control: high vs. low) between-subjects experimental design.

We expected that, similar to when it was measured, the manipulation of emotional control would affect perceived emotional authenticity (i.e., such that perceptions of the expresser's emotional authenticity would be lower when this party's emotional control was high than low), and that this would in turn lower trust in that party. We, furthermore, expected to find similar effects when expressers whose power and emotional control were both high were compared to expressers whose power and emotional control were both low (i.e., the conditions that were most similar to the comparisons made by the prior studies). However, we did not expect high- and low-power expressers to differ in perceived emotional authenticity when their level of emotional control was kept constant and thus unable to play an explanatory role (i.e., when comparing high- and low-power expressers who both had high emotional control, or when comparing high- and low-power expressers who both had low emotional control).

## Method

**Participants.** Participants ( $N = 201$ ; 101 female) from the United States were recruited through MTurk and were each paid \$.50 to complete the study. Participants averaged 36.24 years in age (ranging from 18 to 72 years,  $SD = 11.98$ ).

**Manipulations.** Four versions of the vignette were crafted in accordance with our 2  $\times$  2 experimental design. We used the same vignette from Study 2 and included the same power manipulation as in the prior studies. The employee was then described as having one of two different reputations for emotional control. The employee in the high emotional control condition was described as

having “a reputation for skillfully managing his nonverbal expressions . . . good at suppressing feelings that he does not want others to see and showing expressions that he thinks may help him achieve his goals. . . .” The employee in the low emotional control condition was described as having “a reputation for wearing his heart on his sleeve . . . very transparent about his emotions and expresses them freely and openly, for all to see. . . .”

**Manipulation checks.** Participants responded to the same three manipulation check questions as in the prior studies, as well as a fourth manipulation check for the emotional control manipulation that asked, “In the scenario you read, how would you describe John’s ability to control his emotions?” Participants selected either “highly skilled at controlling the emotions he expresses” or “not skilled at controlling the emotions he expresses.”

**Measures.** We used the same items as in the prior studies to assess perceived emotional authenticity ( $\alpha = .98$ ), trust ( $\alpha = .88$ ) and perceived strategic motivation ( $\alpha = .96$ ).

## Results

**Preliminary assessments.** One hundred ninety (94.5%) participants accurately identified the transgressor’s power, one hundred ninety-four (96.5%) participants accurately identified the emotional expression, and one hundred seventy (84.6%) participants accurately identified the level of emotional control. We dropped those who did not answer these questions correctly from the sample (see Appendix B). Removing them from the sample did not affect support for our predictions. The final sample included one hundred fifty-nine subjects (80 female), with a mean age of 37.06 (ranging from 18 to 72 years,  $SD = 12.38$ ), and 65.3% of the participants possessing a 2-year college degree or higher. By using an alpha of .05, final sample sizes of approximately 40 per condition, and Cohen’s (1988) power analysis guidelines for small, medium, and large effect sizes, the statistical power for this study would be .60, .87, and .98, respectively.

We conducted a principal components analysis (with direct oblimin rotation) with the measures of perceived emotional control, perceived strategic motivation and perceived emotional authenticity to gauge whether they represent three distinct constructs. This analysis provided support for a three-factor structure ( $\lambda_1 = 10.41$ ,  $\lambda_2 = 2.40$ ,  $\lambda_3 = 1.25$ , 82.68% variance explained), in which each of the three predicted factors exhibited an eigenvalue greater than 1. This confirms that these scales can be empirically distinguished.

**Hypothesis tests.** We conducted an ANOVA using perceived emotional authenticity as the dependent variable and the expresser’s power (coded 0 = low, 1 = high) and emotional control (coded 0 = low, 1 = high) as the independent variables. The effect of power on perceived emotional authenticity was not significant,  $F(1, 157) = 3.62$ ,  $p = .24$ , whereas the effect of emotional control was significant ( $F(1, 157) = 36.54$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This latter effect indicates that expressers were perceived to be less emotionally authentic when their level of emotional control was high ( $M = 3.18$ ,  $SD = 1.65$ ) than low ( $M = 4.79$ ,  $SD = 1.52$ ). There was no significant interaction effect of power and emotional control on the perceived authenticity of the expressed emotion,  $F(1, 155) = 1.14$ ,  $p = .29$  (see Figure 4).

We also compared participants’ perceptions of emotional authenticity in the high-power/high emotional control condition to

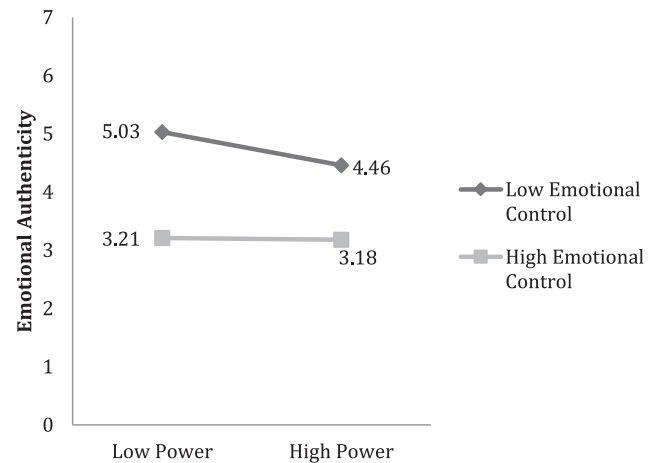


Figure 4. Power and perceived emotional authenticity by emotional control condition (Study 3).

those in the low-power/low emotional control condition. The planned contrast was significant,  $F(2, 158) = 14.94$ ,  $p < .001$ . Participants in the high-power/high emotional control condition ( $M = 3.17$ ,  $SD = 1.64$ ) perceived lower levels of emotional authenticity than those in the low-power/low emotional control condition ( $M = 5.04$ ,  $SD = 1.45$ ),  $t(89) = -5.66$ ,  $p < .001$ . Thus, the comparison of conditions that are most similar to our other studies yielded similar results.

We then tested whether power affected perceived emotional authenticity when those with high- and low-power had the same level of emotional control. Within either the high or low emotional control conditions, there was no significant effect of power on perceived emotional authenticity ( $ps > .11$ ). This indicates that power did not affect perceived emotional authenticity when emotional control was held constant and suggests that perceptions of emotional control carry the effects of power on perceived emotional authenticity.

We also tested whether the effect of emotional control on perceived emotional authenticity ultimately influenced trust. As in the prior studies, perceived emotional authenticity was positively related to trust across all experimental conditions ( $r = .54$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Moreover, a bootstrapped mediation analysis revealed that the effect of emotional control on trust was mediated by perceived emotional authenticity (95% bias-corrected CI  $[-1.12, -.48]$ ).<sup>3</sup>

Finally, we found support for a sequential mediation chain consistent with the prior studies. Specifically, a bootstrapped analysis revealed a significant indirect effect whereby the transgressor’s emotional control condition affected that party’s perceived motivation to use emotions strategically, which then affected perceptions of that party’s emotional authenticity, and ultimately affected perceiver’s trust in that party (95% bias corrected CI  $[-.70, -.23]$ ).

## Discussion

The results from this study support the notion that effect of power on perceived emotional authenticity are driven by differences in perceived emotional control. The level of emotional control significantly influenced perceived emotional authenticity

when it was experimentally manipulated independently of the expresser's power, and power did not influence perceived emotional authenticity when the effect of power was distinguished from the effect of emotional control. Moreover, the effect of emotional control on perceived emotional authenticity ultimately influenced trust, just as in the prior studies, providing further support for our conclusions.

### Study 4

Having verified the role played by emotional control by manipulating, rather than simply measuring, this proposed mediator in Study 3, we likewise sought to verify the mediating role played by strategic motivation in Study 4. To do so, we used the sadness photo from Study 1 and manipulated not only the power of the expresser, but also whether the context for the expression would allow strategic motivations to play a role, with a 2 (power: high vs. low)  $\times$  2 (strategic motivation: high vs. low) experimental design. We expected that perceived emotional authenticity would be lower when the potential for strategic motivation was high than low and that this lower perceived emotional authenticity would, in turn, lower trust in that party. Moreover, when looking within each of these strategic motivation conditions, we expected that perceived emotional authenticity would mediate the effect of power on trust when the potential for strategic motivation was high, but not when the potential for strategic motivation was low.

### Method

**Participants.** Participants ( $N = 204$ ; 124 female) from the United States were recruited through MTurk and were each paid \$.50 to complete the study. Participants averaged 34.03 years in age (ranging from 19 to 65 years,  $SD = 9.95$ ).

**Manipulations.** Four versions of the vignette were crafted in accordance with our 2  $\times$  2 experimental design. We used the same vignette as in Study 1 and the same power manipulation as in the prior studies. The employee was then described to have expressed his emotion in either a public setting (i.e., where the potential strategic motivation to manage impressions would be high) or in a private setting (i.e., where that potential strategic motivation would be low). Thus, for the employee in the high strategic motivation condition the scenario stated, "In a company meeting after his transgression, you observed John making the following expression about his role in the scandal." In the low strategic motivation condition the scenario stated, "While glancing into an office where he was sitting alone after his transgression, you observed John making the following expression about his role in the scandal."

**Manipulation checks.** Participants were asked two questions that assessed whether the manipulations were successful. The first question tested whether they recognized the employee's positional power as in our prior studies. The second question checked the strategic motivation manipulation by asking whether John expressed his emotion "in public" or "in private."

**Measures.** We used the same items as in the prior studies to assess perceived emotional authenticity ( $\alpha = .98$ ), trust ( $\alpha = .87$ ), perceived emotional control ( $\alpha = .80$ ), and perceived strategic motivation ( $\alpha = .96$ ).

### Results

**Preliminary assessments.** A majority of participants ( $n = 196$ ; 96.1%) accurately identified the transgressor's power, and 167 (81.9%) participants accurately identified the transgressor's strategic motivation. We dropped those who did not answer these questions correctly from the sample (see Appendix B). Removing them from the sample did not affect support for our predictions. The final sample included 162 (64 female) participants, with a mean age of 34.79 (ranging from 19 to 65 years,  $SD = 10.15$ ), and 66% of the participants possessing a 2-year college degree or higher. By using an alpha of .05, final sample sizes of approximately 40 per condition, and Cohen's (1988) power analysis guidelines for small, medium, and large effect sizes, the statistical power for this study would be .60, .87, and .98, respectively.

We conducted a principal components analysis (with direct oblimin rotation) with the measures of perceived emotional control, perceived strategic motivation and perceived emotional authenticity to gauge whether they represent three distinct constructs. This analysis provided support for a three-factor structure ( $\lambda_1 = 11.04$ ,  $\lambda_2 = 2.06$ ,  $\lambda_3 = 1.14$ ., 83.76% variance explained), in which each of the three predicted factors exhibited an eigenvalue greater than 1. This confirms that these scales can be empirically distinguished.

**Hypothesis tests.** We first tested the effects of expresser's power (coded 0 = low, 1 = high), strategic motivation (coded 0 = low, 1 = high), and their interaction on perceived emotional authenticity. The main effects of power,  $F(1, 160) = 5.42$ ,  $p = .021$  and strategic motivation,  $F(1, 160) = 19.23$ ,  $p < .001$  on perceived emotional authenticity were significant. Expressers were perceived as less emotionally authentic when their power was high ( $M = 3.09$ ,  $SD = 1.79$ ) than when low ( $M = 3.68$ ,  $SD = 1.81$ ). Expressers were also perceived to be less emotionally authentic when the potential for strategic motivation was high ( $M = 2.81$ ,  $SD = 1.55$ ) rather than low ( $M = 3.99$ ,  $SD = 1.91$ ). We did not find a significant interaction effect of power and strategic motivation on perceived emotional authenticity,  $F(1, 158) = .24$ ,  $p = .63$  (see Figure 5).

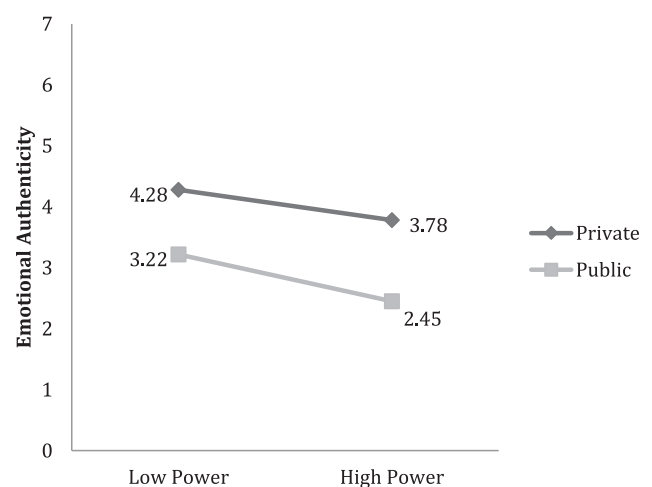


Figure 5. Power and perceived emotional authenticity by strategic motivation condition (Study 4).

However, simple effects revealed that the effect of power on perceived emotional authenticity differed depending on the potential for strategic motivation. When the expression was public, power was significantly related to perceived emotional authenticity,  $F(1, 86) = 5.46$ ,  $p = .02$ . Participants in the high-power/public condition ( $M = 2.45$ ,  $SD = 1.38$ ) perceived lower levels of emotional authenticity than those in the low-power/public condition ( $M = 3.22$ ,  $SD = 1.67$ ). However, when the expression was private, there was no significant relationship between power and perceived emotional authenticity,  $F(1, 74) = 1.26$ ,  $p = .26$ . This suggests that power affects perceived emotional authenticity only in contexts in which strategic motivation might play a role.

We then tested whether the effect of power on perceived emotional authenticity ultimately influenced trust and how this might depend on the potential for strategic motivation. Perceived emotional authenticity was positively related to trust across all conditions ( $r = .45$ ,  $p < .001$ ) as well as within just the low or high strategic motivation conditions ( $ps < .01$ ). However, as expected, a bootstrapped mediation analysis revealed that perceived emotional authenticity played a mediating role between power and trust when the potential for strategic motivation was high (95% bias-corrected CI  $[-.65, -.04]$ ), but not when it was low (95% bias-corrected CI  $[-.32, .03]$ ).<sup>3</sup> Moreover, a bootstrapped mediation analysis also provided support for the same sequential mediation chain from our prior studies (see Figure 3; i.e., wherein the expresser's power affected perceptions of that party's emotional control, which in turn affected perceptions of that party's motivation to use emotions strategically, which then affected perceptions of that expresser's emotional authenticity, and ultimately affected perceivers' trust in that party) when the potential for strategic motivation was high (95% bias corrected CI  $[-.44, -.08]$ ), but not when it was low (95% bias-corrected CI  $[-.33, .04]$ ). No other causal sequence was significant.

## Discussion

The results from this study provide additional support for the notion that the effect of power on perceived emotional authenticity is also driven by differences in perceived strategic motivation. The potential for strategic motivation significantly influenced perceived emotional authenticity when it was experimentally manipulated independently of the expresser's power. Moreover, although perceived emotional authenticity and trust were positively associated in general, support was only found for perceived emotional authenticity mediating the effect of power on trust (as well as the full sequential mediation chain) when the potential for strategic motivation was high, not when it was low.

## Study 5

Despite the strength of these findings, it should be noted that Studies 1 through 4 all involved hypothetical transgressions. Thus, one might wonder if our predictions would be supported with emotions transgressors express in real life. To address this issue, Study 5 asked participants to read about an actual incident in which Toyota Motor Corporation was found to have withheld important details related to a vehicle safety issue that led to lost lives and legal troubles for the firm, and then watch a video of Toyota North America's CEO expressing sadness while testifying

before Congress about the incident. We removed explicit references to this individual's position at Toyota from the video and manipulated this person's power in the organization by stating that this individual was either the CEO or a junior staff member. This study, thus, implemented a 2 (power: high vs. low)  $\times$  1 (emotion: sad) between-subjects design with participants randomly assigned to one of the two study conditions.

At the outset, it should be noted that this study context represents a particularly conservative test of our predictions, given that the recent and broadly publicized nature of this scandal (first made public in 2009) would make it harder to believe that this individual would have been called to testify before Congress if he did not have at least some power and influence within the company. Likewise, the selected video involves the CEO recounting a particularly moving personal tragedy that perceivers may find difficult to consider inauthentic regardless of that person's power. Nevertheless, to the extent that support can be found for the hypotheses despite these obstacles, this would afford further confidence in the robustness of our findings.

## Method

**Participants.** Participants were 161 undergraduates (81 female) from a public university in the Northwestern part of the United States who took part this study in exchange for course credit. Participants averaged 21.61 years in age (ranging from 19 to 44 years,  $SD = 2.81$ ).

**Manipulations.** Two versions of the vignette were crafted in accordance with our experimental design. After describing the Toyota employee as someone who had worked for the firm for 8 years in the capacity of either a CEO (high-power condition) or a junior staff member (low-power condition) and discussing the organizational power associated with this role, we presented the following description of the transgression:

Recently, John was caught having intentionally withheld several major details related to a vehicle safety problem and associated recall, which ultimately led to lives lost and significant legal troubles for the firm. In a meeting following his transgression, John expressed SADNESS about his role in the scandal.

**Video.** Participants subsequently viewed the video of the Toyota representative expressing sadness while making the following statements: "I can tell you . . . I lost a brother in an accident . . . um a week after his 30th birthday. That was 20 some years ago. And there is not a day that goes by that I don't think of that." Results from the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) text analysis program (Pennebaker, Francis, & Booth, 2001), which has been used to assess the extent to which statements convey different emotions (e.g., Golder & Macy, 2011; Kahn, Tobin, Massey, & Anderson, 2007), offer evidence of negative emotion (2.56) but not positive emotion (0.00) and indicate that this negative emotion was comprised entirely of sadness (2.56) as opposed to anger (0.00) or anxiety (0.00).

**Manipulation checks.** Participants responded to the same manipulation check questions regarding the power and emotion manipulations as in Studies 1 and 2. In addition, we asked participants at the end of the study whether they recognized the person from the video, since we used real footage of the Toyota North America CEO's testimony.

**Measures.** We used the same items as in the prior studies to assess perceived emotional authenticity ( $\alpha = .96$ ), trust ( $\alpha = .83$ ), perceived emotional control ( $\alpha = .90$ ), and perceived strategic motivation ( $\alpha = .94$ ), as well as the same three alternative emotion-related mechanisms from Studies 1 and 2 (i.e., typicality [ $\alpha = .69$ ], more strings attached [ $\alpha = .93$ ], and appropriateness [ $\alpha = .85$ ]).

## Results

**Preliminary assessments.** A majority of participants ( $n = 145$ ; 89.0%) accurately identified the expresser's level of power, and 144 (88.3%) accurately identified the emotional expression. In addition, 10 (6.2%) participants indicated that they recognized the person in the video. Those who did not pass the power or emotion manipulation checks, as well as those who recognized the Toyota CEO in the video, were dropped from the sample since this might have biased their judgments (see Appendix B). Removing them from the sample did not change the direction of the results, but enhanced the significance of some of our findings. The final sample included one hundred nineteen subjects (57 female) with a mean age of 21.48 (ranging from 19 to 44 years,  $SD = 2.63$ ). By using an alpha of .05, final sample sizes of approximately 60 per condition, and Cohen's (1988) power analysis guidelines for small, medium, and large effect sizes, the statistical power for this study would be .61, .88, and .98, respectively. Table 5 reports the means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of the study variables.

We conducted a principal components analysis (with direct oblimin rotation) with the measures of perceived emotional control, perceived strategic motivation and perceived emotional authenticity to gauge whether they represent three distinct constructs. This analysis provided support for a three-factor structure ( $\lambda_1 = 9.02$ ,  $\lambda_2 = 3.05$ ,  $\lambda_3 = 1.79$ , 81.58% variance explained), in which each of the three predicted factors exhibited an eigenvalue greater than 1. This confirms that these scales can be empirically distinguished.

Additionally, given that the expresser in the study video makes reference to a personal tragedy while expressing sadness, we also conducted a supplemental study to gauge whether the effects of power would be specific to the perception of emotional authenticity or reflective of a more general effect of power on perceived deception. 100 additional MTurk participants (46 female) were, therefore, tested to gauge participants' beliefs about whether the expresser had been dishonest about experiencing this personal tragedy. After viewing the video in either the high- or low-power condition, participants were asked to respond to two questions on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*),

asking (a) the extent to which they felt John was lying about having a brother who died and (b) whether they thought John made up the story about having a brother who died. The results revealed no difference between the high- ( $M = 2.59$ ;  $SD = 1.68$ ) and low-power conditions ( $M = 2.53$ ,  $SD = 1.66$ ),  $t(98) = .18$ , *ns*.

**Hypothesis tests.** Hypothesis 1 predicted that power would lower perceived emotional authenticity. Perceived emotional authenticity was somewhat lower when expresser's power was high ( $M = 4.15$ ,  $SD = 1.28$ ) than when it was low ( $M = 4.56$ ,  $SD = 1.31$ ),  $t(117) = 1.71$ ,  $p = .089$ , but this difference fell short of significance. This lack of support for a direct effect of power on perceived emotional authenticity, however, does not preclude the possibility that power may affect perceived emotional authenticity indirectly (as described by Hypotheses 2a and 2b).

Hypotheses 2a and 2b predicted that the effect of power on perceived emotional authenticity would be mediated by the expresser's perceived level of emotional control and strategic motivation, respectively. Power was positively related to trustee's perceived emotional control ( $B = 1.26$ ,  $SE = .21$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and perceived emotional control was negatively related to perceived emotional authenticity ( $B = -.28$ ,  $SE = .10$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Likewise, power was positively related to perceived strategic motivation ( $B = .70$ ,  $SE = .25$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and perceived strategic motivation was negatively related to perceived emotional authenticity ( $B = -.52$ ,  $SE = .07$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Moreover, although perceived emotional control and strategic motivation were not both found to mediate the effect of power on perceived emotional authenticity when they were modeled simultaneously as parallel independent mechanisms for that relationship, support for both mediators was found when they were modeled sequentially.<sup>3</sup> Specifically, a bootstrapped mediation analysis revealed a significant indirect effect whereby the transgressor's power affected perceptions of that party's emotional control, which in turn affected perceptions of that party's motivation to use emotions strategically, which then affected perceptions of that party's emotional authenticity (95% bias corrected CI [-.55, -.09]). Thus, perceived emotional control and strategic motivation were each found to play a mediating role in the effect of power on perceived emotional authenticity, supporting Hypotheses 2a and 2b.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that perceived emotional authenticity would directly influence trust, and this prediction was supported ( $B = .40$ ,  $SE = .06$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Finally, Hypothesis 4 predicted that perceived emotional authenticity would mediate the effect of power on trust. Although the pattern of results was consistent with Hypothesis 4, a bootstrapped mediation analysis revealed that the indirect effect of power on

Table 5  
Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations (Study 5)

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. Power (0 = low, 1 = high)	.53	.50				
2. Perceived emotional authenticity	4.34	1.30	-.15			
3. Trust	2.98	1.05	.09	.49**		
4. Emotional control	4.76	1.32	.47**	-.29**	-.12*	
5. Strategic motivation	4.48	1.44	.24*	-.57**	-.45**	.42**

\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*  $p < .001$ .

trust through perceived emotional authenticity included zero (95% bias-corrected CI  $[-.40, .01]$ ), indicating a nonsignificant mediating effect. Significant support for this prediction was found, however, with a 90% bias-corrected CI  $[-.36, -.01]$ . Thus, Hypothesis 4 received only marginal support.

Nevertheless, significant support was once again found for the full sequential mediation chain suggested by the prior studies. Specifically, a bootstrapped mediation analysis again revealed a significant indirect effect whereby the transgressor's power affected perceptions of that party's emotional control, which in turn affected perceptions of that party's motivation to use emotions strategically, which then affected perceptions of that transgressor's emotional authenticity, and ultimately affected perceivers' trust in that party (95% bias corrected CI  $[-.19, -.02]$ ; see Figure 3). No other causal sequence was supported.

## Discussion

As previously mentioned, Study 5 represents a particularly conservative test of our predictions, given that the setting limited our ability to manipulate power. Indeed, although all the participants in the high-power condition correctly identified that the individual had high-power ( $M = 1.00, SD = .00$ ), only 79% of the individuals in the low-power condition correctly indicated that the individual had low-power ( $M = .79, SD = .41$ ),  $t(161) = 4.61, p < .001$ , as we would have expected based on the video. Likewise, participants perceived the display of emotion to be reasonably authentic (above the midpoint of the scale), regardless of the power condition, and more authentic than in any of the other studies, which again works against our results. Nevertheless, the evidence from this study still replicates support for the bulk of our predictions and, thus, provides further confidence in the robustness and generalizability of our findings.

## Study 6

Study 6 sought to extend the generalizability of our findings further by examining the response to a different real-world transgression and, furthermore, sought to obtain a behavioral measure of their implications. Participants were, thus, asked to read about an actual incident in which the CEO of Lululemon, an athletic apparel company, responded to complaints about the fabric in its exercise pants becoming too sheer and uncomfortable. In his response, he publicly insulted some of Lululemon's customers with comments about how the problem may actually stem from the shape of some women's bodies. These statements caused an uproar that the CEO attempted to address with a video recorded statement. This recording differed from the Toyota video in the sense that the transgression concerned a socially egregious statement (rather than the withholding of information, accidents, and deaths), the Lululemon CEO was dressed very casually (rather than in a suit and tie), the statement was filmed in front of a blank white screen (rather than before Congress), the CEO explicitly mentioned his sadness (rather than simply conveying this emotion physically), and no other personal claims were made (unlike the Toyota video, which refers to a personal tragedy). As with the Toyota video, the Lululemon video did not refer to this person's position in the organization. Hence, we manipulated power by stating that this individual was either the CEO or a sales clerk at the company. This

study implemented a 2 (power: high vs. low)  $\times$  1 (emotion: sad) between-subjects design with participants randomly assigned to one of the two study conditions.

## Method

**Participants.** Adult participants ( $N = 120$ ; 51 female) from the United States were recruited through MTurk and were each paid \$.50 to complete the study. Participants averaged 33.51 years in age (ranging from 19 to 61 years,  $SD = 9.68$ ).

**Manipulations.** Two versions of the vignette were crafted in accordance with our experimental design. After describing the transgressor as someone who had worked for the firm for 8 years in the capacity of either a CEO (high-power condition) or a sales clerk (low-power condition) and discussing the organizational power associated with this role, we presented the following description of the transgression:

Recently, the company received criticism for the quality of its exercise pants. Some customers complained that the fabric stretched too much, causing them to become too sheer and uncomfortable when worn. When a journalist approached John about this problem, he responded by publically insulting some of Lululemon's customers. He stated that the customers were to blame, because "some women's bodies just don't actually work" with the company's exercise pants. The statement created enormous public outrage and resulted in significant financial losses for the firm.

**Video.** Participants subsequently viewed the video of the transgressor from Lululemon expressing sadness while making the following statements: "I'm really sad. I'm sad for the repercussions of my actions. I'm sad for the people of Lululemon who I care so much about . . . that have really had to . . . face the brunt of . . . of my actions." Results from the LIWC text analysis program (Pennebaker et al., 2001) offer evidence of much more negative emotion (8.33) than positive emotion (2.78) and indicate that this negative emotion consisted entirely of sadness (8.33) as opposed to anger (0.00) or anxiety (0.00).

**Manipulation checks.** Participants responded to the same manipulation check questions regarding the power and emotion manipulations as in the prior studies. Moreover, as with Study 5, we asked participants at the end of the study whether they recognized the person from the video, since we used real footage of the Lululemon CEO's testimony.

**Measures.** We used the same items as in the prior studies to assess perceived emotional authenticity ( $\alpha = .99$ ), trust ( $\alpha = .91$ ), perceived emotional control ( $\alpha = .87$ ), and perceived strategic motivation ( $\alpha = .95$ ).

We also obtained a behavioral measure of participants' effort to advocate leniency toward the transgressor. Specifically, we provided participants with a blank text box and asked them to make as strong a case as possible for why Lululemon should treat the person in the video with leniency. We counted the number of words in participants' arguments as our effort measure.

## Results

**Preliminary assessments.** Seven participants failed the power manipulation check and 3 participants failed the emotion manipulation check. Additionally, 4 participants recognized the

person from the video. These subjects were dropped from analysis, leaving 106 participants (41 female) in the final sample (see Appendix B). Average age was 33.34 years (range 19–61 years,  $SD = 9.54$ ), and 57.1% of the participants possessed a 2-year college degree or higher. Removing participants from the sample did not change the significance of our findings. By using an alpha of .05, final sample sizes of approximately 53 per condition, and Cohen's (1988) power analysis guidelines for small, medium, and large effect sizes, the statistical power for this study would be .60, .86, and .97, respectively. Table 6 reports the means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations among the study variables.

We conducted a principal components analysis (with direct oblimin rotation) with the measures of perceived emotional control, perceived strategic motivation and perceived emotional authenticity to gauge whether they represent three distinct constructs. This analysis provided support for a three-factor structure ( $\lambda_1 = 10.81$ ,  $\lambda_2 = 2.47$ ,  $\lambda_3 = 1.30$ ., 85.79% variance explained), in which each of the three predicted factors exhibited an eigenvalue greater than 1. This confirms that these scales can be empirically distinguished.

**Hypothesis tests.** Hypothesis 1 predicted that power would lower perceived emotional authenticity. Consistent with that prediction, perceived emotional authenticity was significantly lower when the expresser's power was high ( $M = 2.52$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ) than when it was low ( $M = 4.00$ ,  $SD = 1.89$ ),  $t(104) = 4.65$ ,  $p < .001$ . Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

Hypothesis 2a and 2b predicted that the effect of power on perceived emotional authenticity would be mediated by the expresser's perceived level of emotional control and strategic motivation, respectively. Power was positively related to trustee's perceived emotional control ( $B = 1.70$ ,  $SE = .24$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and perceived emotional control was negatively related to perceived emotional authenticity ( $B = -.26$ ,  $SE = .13$ ,  $p = .042$ ). Likewise, power was positively related to perceived strategic motivation ( $B = 1.91$ ,  $SE = .30$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and perceived strategic motivation was negatively related to perceived emotional authenticity ( $B = -.64$ ,  $SE = .08$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Moreover, although perceived emotional control and strategic motivation were not both found to mediate the effect of power on perceived emotional authenticity when they were modeled simultaneously as parallel independent mechanisms for that relationship, support for both mediators was found when they were modeled sequentially.<sup>3</sup> Specifically, a bootstrapped mediation analysis revealed a significant indirect effect whereby the transgressor's power affected perceptions of that party's emotional control, which in turn affected perceptions of that party's motivation to use emotions strategically, which then

affected perceptions of that party's emotional authenticity (95% bias corrected CI  $[-.87, -.11]$ ). Thus, perceived emotional control and strategic motivation were each found to play a mediating role in the effect of power on perceived emotional authenticity, supporting Hypotheses 2a and 2b.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that perceived emotional authenticity would directly influence trust, and this prediction was supported ( $B = .47$ ,  $SE = .07$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Hypothesis 4 predicted that perceived emotional authenticity would mediate the effect of power on trust. A bootstrapped mediation analysis revealed that the effect of power on trust was significantly mediated by perceived emotional authenticity (95% bias corrected CI  $[-1.14, -.33]$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 4 was supported.

Moreover, we again found support for the full sequential mediation chain suggested by the prior studies. Specifically, a bootstrapped mediation analysis revealed a significant indirect effect whereby the transgressor's power affected perceptions of that party's emotional control, which in turn affected perceptions of that party's motivation to use emotions strategically, which then affected perceptions of that transgressor's emotional authenticity, and ultimately affected perceivers' trust in that party (95% bias corrected CI  $[-.35, -.03]$ ; see Figure 3). We did not find support for any other causal sequence.

Finally, we found that the expresser's power ultimately influenced the amount of effort participants exerted when making a case for leniency. Participants wrote more words when asked to make arguments for leniency when the expresser's power was low ( $M = 36.58$ ,  $SD = 24.61$ ) than high ( $M = 25.71$ ,  $SD = 16.90$ ),  $t(104) = 2.63$ ,  $p = .01$ . However, tests of whether perceived emotional authenticity (95% bias corrected CI  $[-.67, 7.17]$ ) or trust (95% bias corrected CI  $[-2.23, 2.96]$ ) mediated the effect of power on this behavioral measure fell short of significance.

## Study 7

After completing these studies, we also conducted meta-analyses of our data. The goals of the meta-analyses were threefold: (a) to assess overall support of our model and hypotheses across our four main studies (Studies 1, 2, 5, and 6, but excluding Studies 3 and 4, which were designed to test different patterns of predictions), (b) to ensure that these findings were not unduly affected by our participant exclusion criteria, and (c) to examine several alternative models of the mediated path between power and authenticity. Population parameters were estimated as weighted correlations, and path models were subsequently computed in

Table 6  
Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations (Study 6)

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1. Power (0 = low, 1 = high)	.48	.50					
2. Perceived emotional authenticity	3.28	1.79	-.41***				
3. Trust	3.17	1.46	-.28**	.57***			
4. Effort to advocate leniency	31.34	21.85	-.25*	-.01	.05		
5. Emotional control	4.81	1.49	.57***	-.38***	-.27**	-.08	
6. Strategic motivation	4.88	1.80	.53***	-.68***	-.56***	-.10	.51***

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .



LISREL. We followed past research (Bhaskar-Shrinivas, Harrison, Shaffer, & Luk, 2005; Dalton, Certo, & Roengpitya, 2003) by limiting our meta-analytic tests to questions for which at least three effect sizes were available. In all cases, statements about the “restricted sample” refer to the use of exclusion criteria that remove participants who failed the manipulation checks, whereas statements about the “full sample” refer to the inclusion of all participants, including those who failed the manipulation checks.

## Main Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 predicted that power would lower perceived emotional authenticity. Results support this hypothesis in the restricted sample ( $M\bar{r} = -.25$ ; Weighted  $M\bar{r} = -.25$ ; 95% CI =  $[-.34, -.15]$ ) as well as the full sample ( $M\bar{r} = -.23$ ; Weighted  $M\bar{r} = -.23$ ; 95% CI =  $[-.34, -.11]$ ).

Hypotheses 2a and 2b posited that the effect of power on authenticity would be mediated by perceived emotional control and strategic motivation, respectively. We first tested whether these mediators would act as parallel, rather than sequential, mediators of the effect of power on authenticity. This model demonstrated a marginal fit in the restricted sample,  $\chi^2(2) = 95.72$ ,  $p < .001$ , (CFI = .92; RMSEA = .22, SRMR = .09) and in the full sample,  $\chi^2(2) = 151.32$ ,  $p < .001$ , (CFI = .89; RMSEA = .24, SRMR = .10), but did not fit the data as well as the sequential model. Specifically, the model wherein the effect of power on authenticity is sequentially mediated, first by perceived emotional control and then by strategic motivation, received stronger support in the restricted sample,  $\chi^2(3) = 19.65$ ,  $p < .01$ , (CFI = .99; RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .05), as well as the full sample,  $\chi^2(3) = 15.10$ ,  $p = .002$ , (CFI = .99; RMSEA = .06, SRMR = .04).

Hypothesis 3 predicted that perceived authenticity would directly affect trust. Results support this hypothesis in the restricted sample ( $M\bar{r} = .41$ ; Weighted  $M\bar{r} = .40$ ; 95% CI =  $[.22, .55]$ ) as well as the full sample ( $M\bar{r} = .42$ ; Weighted  $M\bar{r} = .41$ ; 95% CI =  $[.24, .55]$ ).

Hypothesis 4 predicted that the effect of power on trust would be mediated by perceived emotional authenticity. Results support this hypothesis in the restricted sample,  $\chi^2(1) = 4.66$ ,  $p = .03$ , (CFI = .99; RMSEA = .06, SRMR = .02), as well as the full sample,  $\chi^2(1) = 4.80$ ,  $p = .03$ , (CFI = .99; RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .02).

We also assessed the full chain mediation model depicted in Figure 3, wherein power would affect perceived emotional control, which would in turn affect perceived strategic motivation, which would then affect perceived emotional authenticity, and finally affect trust. Results support this full chain mediation model in the restricted sample,  $\chi^2(6) = 43.96$ ,  $p < .001$ , (CFI = .97; RMSEA = .08, SRMR = .05), as well as the full sample,  $\chi^2(6) = 43.26$ ,  $p < .001$ , (CFI = .98; RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .04).

## Alternative Emotion-Related Mechanisms

Moreover, given that three of the four main studies (specifically, Studies 1, 2, and 5) also examined a number of alternative emotion-related mechanisms that might mediate the relationship between power and perceived emotional authenticity, we assessed these possibilities through meta-analysis as well.

The first alternative model posited that beliefs about the powerful having “more strings attached” to the expression (i.e., more

situational constraints on the types of expressions they might use) would mediate the effect of power on authenticity. Results did not support this hypothesis in the restricted sample,  $\chi^2(1) = 33.85$ ,  $p < .001$ , (CFI = .67; RMSEA = .19, SRMR = .08), or in the full sample,  $\chi^2(1) = 31.92$ ,  $p < .001$ , (CFI = .72; RMSEA = .16, SRMR = .07).

The second alternative model posited that differences in how “typical” it would be for someone in that position to express emotions would mediate the effect of power on authenticity. Results did not support this hypothesis in the restricted sample,  $\chi^2(1) = 43.61$ ,  $p < .001$ , (CFI = .46; RMSEA = .22, SRMR = .09), or in the full sample,  $\chi^2(1) = 39.95$ ,  $p < .001$ , (CFI = .53; RMSEA = .18, SRMR = .07).

Finally, the third alternative model posited that differences in how “appropriate” it would be for someone in that position to express emotions would mediate the effect of power on authenticity. Results did not support this hypothesis in the restricted sample,  $\chi^2(1) = 47.47$ ,  $p < .001$ , (CFI = .59; RMSEA = .23, SRMR = .09), or in the full sample,  $\chi^2(1) = 43.77$ ,  $p < .001$ , (CFI = .70; RMSEA = .19, SRMR = .08).

## General Discussion

The purpose of this research was to investigate the implications of power for perceived emotional authenticity and trust after a transgression. The studies involved different types of emotions, operationalizations of the transgression, emotion stimuli, and participant populations. Yet they consistently revealed that expressers are perceived to be less emotionally authentic when their power is high rather than low and that this, in turn, directly influences (and ultimately mediates) the level of trust in that party. This tendency to discount the emotional authenticity of the powerful was also found to arise from power increasing the expresser’s perceived level of emotional control and strategic motivation rather than a host of alternative mechanisms, such as liking, warmth, perceivers’ positive or negative affect, perceived responsibility, perceived competence, or trust<sup>2</sup> (as well as a number of alternative emotion-related mechanisms, such as power affecting the freedom to express emotions or the perceived typicality or appropriateness of the emotion). Moreover, the studies provide clear and consistent support for a specific form of sequential mediation, in which power increased the expresser’s perceived emotional control, which in turn increased that party’s perceived motivation to use emotions strategically, and hence decreased the expresser’s perceived emotional authenticity, and ultimately lowered trust in that party (see Figure 3). Finally, perceivers were ultimately found to exert less effort to advocate leniency toward the expresser when that party’s power was high rather than low.

## Theoretical Implications

These results offer important implications for a growing body of research on the interface between power and emotion. Whereas past research has observed that power can increase emotional authenticity (e.g., Hecht & LaFrance, 1998), that work has specifically been concerned with the implications of power for emotional expressions. Thus, by finding that the implications of power for the perception of emotional authenticity are completely reversed, the present research shifts the literature from an intrapersonal to an

interpersonal level of analysis to reveal how power can affect how emotions are viewed in a way that may have nothing to do with the expresser's actual emotional authenticity and, thereby, produce potentially serious errors in both this and ensuing judgments (i.e., perceived trustworthiness after a transgression).

By doing so, this inquiry also contributes to the emotions literature itself. Although research on this topic has flourished, and both the potential for emotions to convey trust-relevant information (de Melo, Carnevale, Read, & Gratch, 2014) and the importance of emotional authenticity for conveying such information (Côté et al., 2013; Kopelman et al., 2006; Thompson & Kim, 2000) have been recognized, this literature has focused predominantly on how perceived emotional authenticity might be influenced by either aspects of the expression itself or the expression's consistency with normative expectations (Campellone & Kring, 2013; Hecht & LaFrance, 1998; Kifer et al., 2013; Kraus et al., 2011; Maringer et al., 2011; Van Kleef, 2016). Our effects, in contrast, were found to hold regardless of the expression used and, hence, regardless of how the emotion is expressed or whether it is normatively consistent. The fact that this occurred regardless of such considerations attests to the robustness of this phenomenon and highlights the opportunity to identify implications that may hold more broadly across emotions than prior research has considered.

In this regard, it is also important to note that this research was not designed to challenge the basic notion that normatively consistent expressions would be considered more authentic. For example, although sadness was not considered more emotionally authentic than happiness (see Tables 2 and 4), in contrast to what ten Brinke and Adams (2015) observed, this may simply be due to that prior work having the expresser offer an apology in addition to the expression and, thus, making it clear that expressions of sadness would be more normatively appropriate. Our research, in contrast, was not concerned with whether the expression was normatively consistent with an apology and, thus, left open the possibility that the expresser would address the transgression in other ways (e.g., with a denial, excuse, or justification; Ferrin et al., 2007; Kim, Dirks, Cooper, & Ferrin, 2006; Kim & Harmon, 2014). For this reason, it was far less clear whether sadness would be more normatively consistent than other expressions (e.g., anger if one anticipates a denial, fear if one anticipates an excuse, or even happiness if one anticipates a justification that attempts to frame the incident as beneficial) and, hence, whether that expression would be considered more emotionally authentic. Indeed, it is quite possible that sadness would have been perceived to be more authentic than happiness if an explicit apology had been used.

Nevertheless, the present research does present an altogether different theoretical account of how power can affect both perceived emotional authenticity and trust than what past research has considered. Specifically, although ten Brinke and Adams (2015) investigated the implications of power for perceived emotional authenticity and trust after a transgression, that work treated power simply as a boundary condition for the notion that emotional expressions would be perceived to be less authentic when they are inconsistent with what perceivers expect to be displayed (i.e., such that normatively inconsistent expressions would lower perceived emotional authenticity when the expresser's power was high, but not when it was low). Our research, in contrast, reveals how power may not just play this kind of ancillary role, but can also have more

fundamental implications by directly impairing the extent to which authenticity can be conveyed.

Moreover, by highlighting how this implication for perceived emotional authenticity ultimately affects trust, our findings extend recent observations that power may make it more difficult to repair trust after a transgression (Fragale et al., 2009; Kim et al., 2009; Overbeck et al., 2006), by highlighting an entirely different mechanism through which this might occur. In particular, those past observations were based on the notion that because the powerful have more control over their actions, they would be considered more responsible for their transgressions. However, each of the present studies controlled for this possibility by making it explicit that the transgression was an intentional act for which the transgressor was fully responsible. Plus, the pilot study we reported along with Study 1 reveals that this effort to control for such differences in perceived responsibility for the transgression was successful. Yet, our studies still found the powerful to be considered less trustworthy than those with less power after the transgression. Thus, even though it is conceivable that power hinders efforts to address a transgression by affecting perceptions of responsibility, our findings suggest that this detrimental effect of power can arise through an emotional mechanism as well.

Our findings, furthermore, complement earlier research on the moderating role of power in shaping the social effects of emotions. Previous studies have shown that high- and low-power parties respond quite differently to the emotions of others. For instance, high-power individuals have been found to be less likely than low-power counterparts to converge emotionally with others (Anderson, Keltner, & John, 2003), to be less responsive to the suffering of conversation partners (Van Kleef et al., 2008), and to be less likely to take opponents' emotions into account during negotiations (Sinaceur & Tiedens, 2006; Van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2004). Moreover, the emotion recognition and emotional mimicry responses of the powerful (compared to the powerless) have been found to be more variable and modulated by powerful individuals' hierarchical concerns (Carr, Winkelman, & Oveis, 2014; Stamkou, Van Kleef, Fischer, & Kret, 2016). As such, this literature suggests that power can affect the social-regulatory functions of emotions by altering parties' interactional goals and attention to the emotions of others (Keltner, Van Kleef, Chen, & Kraus, 2008). The current findings add a new chapter to this literature by showing that power may also influence social interactions by leading others to doubt the authenticity of expressers' emotional displays.

Finally, the results offer insights that may help broaden understanding of the dynamics of interpersonal perceptions. Past research in this domain has investigated how people's beliefs about themselves and others can arise through a critical interplay between the views of targets and perceivers, and has revealed how this dynamic not only creates discrepancies in our interpersonal perceptions, but also affects a wide range of outcomes and behaviors (Kim, 1997, 2003; Kim, Diekmann, & Tenbrunsel, 2003; Snyder & Stukas, 1999; Swann, 1987). However, that work has been largely focused on the perception of individual traits (e.g., competence or integrity). The present findings, thus, extend these considerations by revealing how this interplay can also arise and go awry with regard to the perceived authenticity of emotional expressions. Indeed, they suggest that even if the powerful do tend to be more emotionally skilled than those in less powerful roles

(George, 2000), perceivers may also recognize and adjust for this tendency, and that it may ultimately be the balance between such perceptions and reality that makes the difference.

### Limitations and Future Directions

The results from our inquiry also raise a number of questions for future research. For example, one might wonder if similar effects of power on perceived emotional authenticity and trust could be found when a transgression has not occurred. In this regard, Study 4 found that perceivers were more likely to question whether an emotion is genuine when the context allowed strategic motivations to play a role, such as when the expresser is making a public attempt to address a transgression. Thus, we expect that our findings are more likely to arise after a transgression has, rather than has not, occurred. Nevertheless, it is certainly possible that power would affect perceived emotional authenticity in other contexts where perceivers may attribute such expressions to strategic motivations, and we would encourage future studies to verify this notion. Likewise, our finding that power did not affect perceived emotional authenticity when the emotion was expressed in private (rather than in public) suggests that future research also consider other contingencies that might dampen, or even reverse, this relationship.

One might also note that although perceivers were found to exert less effort to advocate leniency when the expresser's power was high rather than low, this was assessed through simple word counts, and tests of whether perceived authenticity or trust mediated the effect of power on this measure fell short of significance. Thus, although the differences in this measure are at least consistent with our theory, additional research is needed to support these causal relationships.

Furthermore, we should observe that although Studies 1 and 2 examined a wider array of emotions, the remaining experiments focused specifically on sadness. This decision to focus on sadness in the remaining experiments was made based on our theoretical foundations, which posited that our effects would hold regardless of the expression, the lack of empirical evidence for any differences across the various emotions we had tested in Studies 1 and 2, and the notion that sadness is more likely to be expressed than many other emotions by those seeking to mitigate the consequences of their transgressions. Nevertheless, confidence in the generalizability of our findings across emotions could be bolstered by including a broader array of emotions in future studies.

Finally, one might wonder how the effects uncovered here might vary in other cultures, where norms about the use of emotions (Glenn, Witmeyer, & Stevenson, 1977) and/or beliefs about the relationship between power and emotional experience might differ (Mondillon et al., 2005) or with expressers who differ on characteristics other than power (e.g., gender; Shields, 2005). To the extent that such differences affect perceivers' expectations about emotional expressions, this may in turn affect their perception of emotional authenticity and expressers' subsequent ability to address transgressions in ways beyond what our research has shown.

Notwithstanding these open questions, our core prediction that the perceived authenticity of emotions after a transgression depends on the expresser's power and can ultimately affect trust seems well-supported. As such, the results provide a counterpoint

to the wealth of research on the benefits of power, by revealing how power can come with a notable downside.

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## Appendix A

### Study 1

#### Vignette

John is a [CEO/junior staff member] at Company X. John has worked in the company for 8 years. In his capacity as [CEO/junior staff member], John has [considerable/little] power and influence in the organization. He [has access/lacks] to valuable information that [few/] other organization members [/do] have. [John's subordinates must report to him, and he has the power to reward or punish them, for instance by granting or withholding vacation days./John must report to his supervisor, who can reward or punish him, for instance by granting or withholding vacation days.]

Recently, John was caught having clearly falsified several major details in a report, which ultimately led to some significant financial penalties for the firm. In a company meeting following his transgression, John was observed making the following expression about his role in the scandal. (Emotion photo)

#### Dependent Measures

Authenticity (1 = *strongly agree*, 7 = *strongly disagree*)

1. John is probably faking how he feels.
2. John is probably pretending, or putting on an act.
3. Overall, I would say this emotion expression is probably *fake*.
4. John's emotional display is probably *manipulative*.
5. John's emotional display is probably *strategic*.
6. John's emotional display is probably *sincere*. (reverse-scored)
7. John's emotional display is probably *genuine*. (reverse-scored)
8. Overall, I would say this emotion expression is probably *authentic*. (reverse-scored)

9. Overall, I would say this emotion expression is probably *real*. (reverse-scored)

Trust (1 = *strongly agree*, 7 = *strongly disagree*)

1. I would feel comfortable working with John in the future.
2. I would feel comfortable with John working on a similar task in the future without oversight.
3. If I worked with John again, I would keep my eye on him. (reverse-scored)
4. If I had a choice, I wouldn't let John have any influence over issues that are important to me. (reverse-scored)

#### Additional Measures (Assessed by the Study 1 Pretest)

Liking (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *extremely*)

1. John seems to be someone I would choose to be around.
2. John seems likable.
3. I think I would enjoy being around John.

Warmth (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *extremely*)

After reading the information about John, what is your perception of him?

John seems to be:

1. Tolerant
2. Warm
3. Good-natured
4. Sincere

(Appendices continue)

**Positive and Negative Affect (See Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988)**

Responsibility/Blame (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*)

1. John was responsible for having falsified details in the report.
2. John was to blame for falsifying this report.

Perceived competence (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*)

1. John is very capable of performing his job.
2. John has much knowledge about the work that needs to be done on the job.
3. I feel very confident about John's skills.

Trust (1 = *strongly agree*, 7 = *strongly disagree*)

1. I would feel comfortable working with John in the future.
2. I would feel comfortable with John working on a similar task in the future without oversight.
3. If I worked with John again, I would keep my eye on him. (reverse-scored)
4. If I had a choice, I wouldn't let John have any influence over issues that are important to me. (reverse-scored)

**Alternative Emotion-Related Mechanisms (Assessed in Studies 1, 2, and 5)**

Typicality (1 = *strongly agree*, 7 = *strongly disagree*)

1. This kind of expression is unusual for someone in John's level/position. (reverse-scored)
2. I would NOT have expected someone in John's level/position to exhibit this kind of expression. (reverse-scored)
3. People in John's level/position generally exhibit this kind of expression.

More strings attached (1 = *strongly agree*, 7 = *strongly disagree*)

1. John has to be careful about what kind of expression to display.
2. John needs to think about the implications of this expression.
3. John needs to consider the potential consequences of this expression in this situation.

Appropriateness (1 = *strongly agree*, 7 = *strongly disagree*)

1. John's expression was inappropriate. (reverse-scored)
2. John's expression was appropriate in this situation.
3. This was the right expression to display in this kind of situation.
4. John's expression makes sense in this situation.

(Appendices continue)

