© *Academy of Management Journal*
2022, Vol. 65, No. 1, 93–118.
https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2019.0746

LONGING FOR THE ROAD NOT TAKEN: THE AFFECTIVE AND BEHAVIORAL CONSEQUENCES OF FORGONE IDENTITY DWELLING

RACHEL BURGESS
Arizona State University

JASON A. COLQUITT
University of Notre Dame

ERIN C. LONG
University of Georgia

The literature on identity construction has argued that employees work to create coherent and distinctive identities that encapsulate individual characteristics and professional and organizational memberships. Models of identity construction have suggested that a past career decision—choosing one professional "road" while leaving behind a "road not taken"—should lose its salience over time. We challenged that consensus by introducing the construct of forgone identity dwelling—thinking about and reflecting on a professional path that could have been. Our field and experimental studies showed that employees did dwell on forgone professional identities, even when the decision events that resulted in them were years in the past. Drawing on cognitive-motivational-relational theory, we showed that forgone identity dwelling resulted in longing—a yearning for something missing. Such longing created a "double-edged sword" for the behavioral consequences of forgone identity dwelling. On the one hand, longing was associated with increased withdrawal behavior and decreased helping behavior because employees were distracted from the here and now. On the other hand, longing was associated with job crafting that in turn reduced those reactions—particularly for employees with an internal locus of control. We discuss the implications of our work for models of identity construction.

> Animals, particularly dogs, are my passion. I like animals way more than most people. Had I been a veterinarian, I would be living my dream. The benefits and salary would be better than working in the non-profit sector, as I do now, but for me, the biggest benefit would be that I would not view it as work. Spending the day with, around, and helping animals is my ideal.
>
> —*Social worker*

The literature on work identity has expanded into many corners of management over the past two decades (Ashforth, Harrison, & Corley, 2008; Miscenko & Day, 2016). Work identity is a self-referential description of how employees answer the question "Who am I?" at work. In practice, the answer to that question can be conceived at varying levels of inclusiveness (Miscenko & Day, 2016). An individual identity focuses on the unique traits and characteristics that differentiate an employee. An organizational identity focuses on membership in the collective represented by one's employer. A professional identity focuses on membership in the collective represented by one's occupation. Consider the example of a Silicon Valley employee who reflects on that "Who am I?" at work question. Given these varying levels of inclusiveness, the employee could summarize their work identity as "I'm a team player," "I'm a Googler," or "I'm an accountant."

One of the more vibrant topics in the work identity literature is identity construction, which focuses on the process whereby employees come to define who they are (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016). The term "identity construction" is often used synonymously with the term "identity work" (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016; Brown, 2015; Miscenko & Day, 2016; Pratt, 2012), defined as the repairing, maintaining, and revising of identity constructions to create a sense of coherence and distinctiveness (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). Conceptualizations of identity construction depict a sometimes messy or contested process

of sensemaking, experimentation, and narrative construction that eventually results in an identity that connects different experiences, reduces a sense of fragmentation, and illustrates the uniqueness of the employee (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016; Brown, 2015).

Although formulations differ in some respects, the consensus among identity construction scholars is that the process marches forward in its progress. Whatever its twists and turns, employees should eventually arrive at a work identity that is coherent and distinctive (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016; Brown, 2015). Although that consensus regarding forward progress may capture the dynamic for many employees, we believe it is problematic for others. Specifically, we argue that some employees may continue to dwell on former identity constructions long after the process should have rendered them moot. That is, past identity-relevant decisions, experiences, or memberships may continue to influence employees even after sensemaking, experimentation, and narrative construction have marched forward. To the degree that this occurs, understanding work identity requires understanding an employee's current identities and their "identity echoes" from the past.

To examine such dynamics, we introduce the construct of identity dwelling. Dwelling occurs when people think about something in a repetitive and circular fashion (Lyubomirsky, Boehm, Kasri, & Zehm, 2011). Thus, *identity dwelling* occurs when employees think about and reflect upon past identity constructions. Building on Obodaru (2012, 2017), we focused specifically on dwelling on *forgone professional identities*—alternative occupational selves that employees could have possessed if decision events had played out differently. The quote that opens our paper was voiced by a social worker who could have been a veterinarian. The possibility that her forgone professional identity might continue to matter in her current work life is not something that models of identity construction would predict. To borrow language from Robert Frost, such a possibility would illustrate that "the road not taken" can continue to shape work reactions, even while "the road taken" is being experienced.

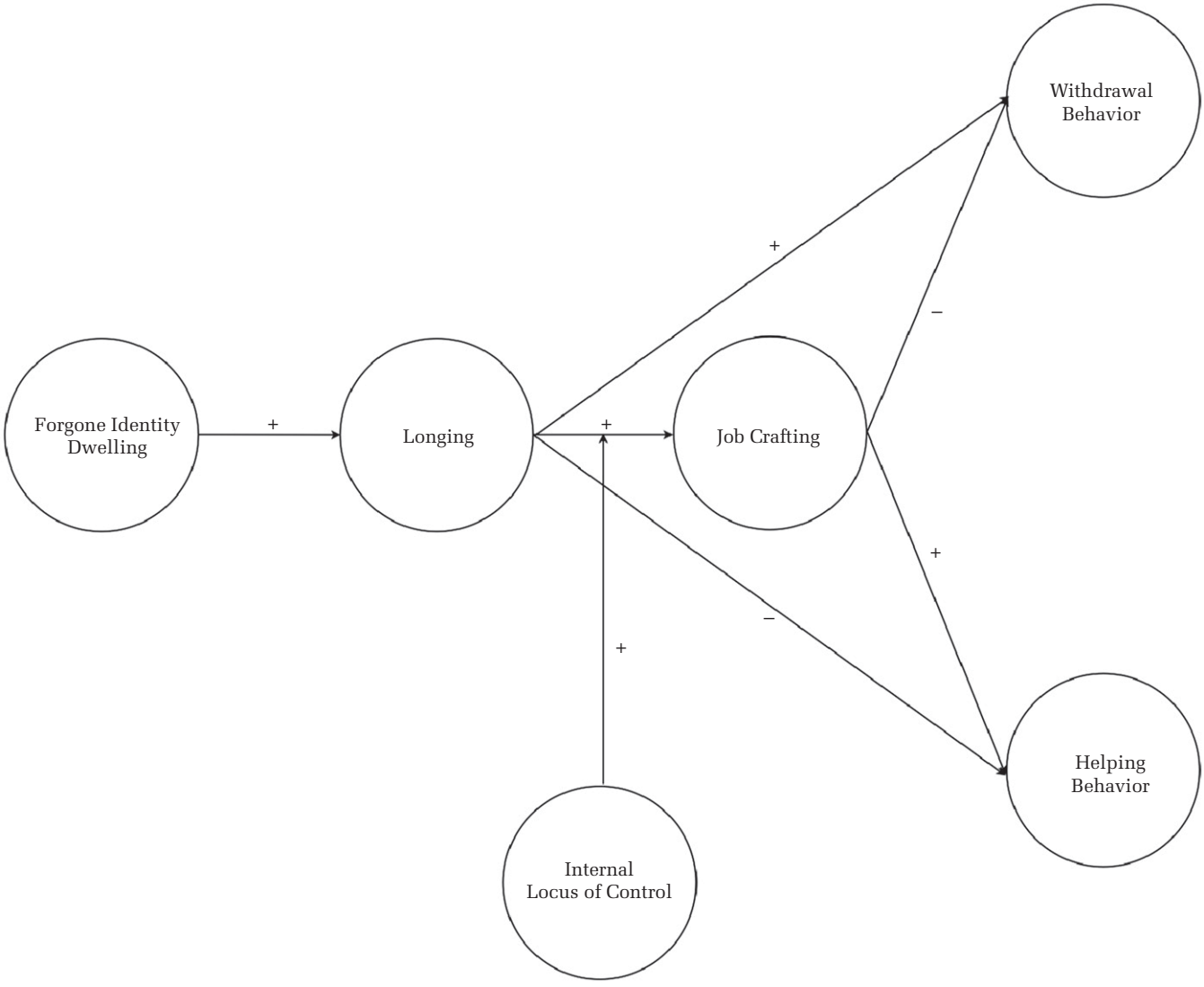
Drawing on Lazarus's (1991) cognitive-motivational-relational theory, we argue that dwelling on forgone professional identities can trigger *longing*—an emotion experienced as a need or desire for something missing (Holm, 1999). If unchecked, such longing could lead to more *withdrawal behavior*—actions that employees perform to avoid the work situation (Hanisch & Hulin, 1990)—and less *helping behavior*—cooperative behaviors that represent small acts of consideration and that build and preserve relationships (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). We further theorize, however, that longing can trigger beneficial responses that circumvent those detrimental reactions. Specifically, longing can lead to *job crafting*—proactive behaviors employees engage in to change their work boundaries in an effort to improve their work experience (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). We further argue that the effect of longing on job crafting will depend on individual differences in how one views life events, captured here by *locus of control*—the extent to which people believe they are in control of their lives (Rotter, 1966). Our theoretical model is shown in Figure 1.

We test our predictions in a field study of employees working in multiple occupations (Study 1) and two experimental studies (Studies 2a and 2b) that use an experimental-causal-chain approach (Spencer, Zanna, & Fong, 2005). Study 1 tests the entire model in Figure 1 using newly validated measures of forgone identity dwelling and longing. Studies 2a and 2b then replicate our most pivotal linkages using designs that emphasize internal validity. Study 2a manipulates forgone identity dwelling to test its effects on feelings of longing. Study 2b then manipulates longing to test its effects on intentions to job craft, including the moderating effects of locus of control. Taken together, our studies reveal that dwelling on forgone professional identities can have important implications for employees as they work within their current professional identities.

Our manuscript makes a number of contributions to the literature on identity construction. First and foremost, illustrating that "identity echoes" from the past can influence employee reactions after a current work identity has been created goes against the forward progress inherent in models of identity construction (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016). Such models would assume that "roads not taken" would be justified via sensemaking, left behind by additional experimentation, or folded into larger narrative arcs, thereby losing their salience. Indeed, any continuing salience of a forgone professional identity would represent a lack of coherence within the current work identity—something that most models of identity construction explicitly seek to avoid (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016; Brown, 2015; Caza, Vough, & Puranik, 2018).

Second, our model extends Obodaru's (2012, 2017) work by introducing the construct of dwelling

FIGURE 1
Theoretical Model



on forgone identity and by linking such dwelling to longing. That focus on longing—an affective mechanism—complements the cognitive bent of the identity construction literature. Reviews of that domain have made the case that identity construction has paid too little attention to emotions (Brown, 2015; Caza et al., 2018; Winkler, 2018). Indeed, identity work has often been defined as explicitly cognitive (Caza et al., 2018), with process models emphasizing cognitive constructs while omitting affective ones (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016). That same cognitive emphasis was seen in Obodaru's (2012, 2017) theorizing on forgone identities. Showing that such identities can trigger longing, and that longing can result in job crafting, illustrates some of the promise that an affective focus could bring to the literature.

Third, our use of quantitative methods—with both measures and manipulations of identity dwelling and longing—complements the largely qualitative approach taken in past work on identity construction. Reviews of the literature have pointed to a "methodological myopia" where qualitative and conceptual papers outpace quantitative ones (Caza et al., 2018; Miscenko & Day, 2016). Caza et al. (2018) argued that this imbalance creates a lack of theory testing and inadequate attention paid to individual differences. Our work therefore addresses such concerns by testing hypotheses inspired by

qualitative work (Obodaru, 2012, 2017), grounded in an existing theoretical framework (Lazarus, 1991), and by including a relevant individual difference in the form of locus of control.

THEORY DEVELOPMENT

A professional identity draws on membership in an occupation as a valid definition of oneself (Miscenko & Day, 2016). Professional identities are consequential for employees given that professions dictate many job characteristics—characteristics that go on to shape general life happiness (Judge, Locke, Durham, & Kluger, 1998; Judge & Watanabe, 1993). Moreover, professional identities take on increased importance as employees change organizations more frequently. Descriptions of the so-called "boundaryless career" have noted that organizational memberships have become much more fluid but that most workers continue to stay within a given occupation (Ng, Sorensen, Eby, & Feldman, 2007; Tolbert, 1996). To the degree that this occurs, professional identities become a more salient aspect of one's work identity.

Obodaru's (2017) study of forgone professional identities has provided a helpful jumping off point for our work on identity dwelling. Drawing on open-ended surveys and interviews of people in a variety of industries, Obodaru (2017) found that almost all participants could point to an "alternative self." Alternative selves reflect who people could have been and are a product of mentally undoing key life decisions (Obodaru, 2012). The most common type of alternative self in Obodaru's (2017) data was a forgone professional identity, where an employee could have entered a different occupation than they wound up pursuing. Her qualitative theorizing suggested that forgone identities can remain salient through vicarious experiences with others working in the forgone path and through imagining what alternate realities would have looked like.

Forgone Identity Dwelling and Longing

Forgone professional identities provide one past identity construction—one "identity echo"—that could be used to examine identity dwelling. Dictionary definitions of dwelling include the physical act of living or staying in something but also the cognitive act of lingering over and pondering something. Scientific definitions of dwelling have described it as thinking about something in a repetitive or circular fashion—something that constitutes cognitive interference that can impair concentration (Lyubomirsky et al., 2011). Examining identity dwelling with respect to forgone professional identities focuses that repetitive and circular reflection on the "road not taken" (Obodaru, 2017).

Importantly, research on dwelling has illustrated that it can have significant affective consequences (Lyubomirsky et al., 2011; Mathieson, Klimes-Dougan, & Crick, 2014). Indeed, one large-scale review of the broader literature on repetitive thought has illustrated that its consequences are mostly affective in nature (Watkins, 2008). Understanding our specific theorizing about affective consequences requires understanding the taxonomic structure of the emotion space. Specifically, emotion scholars have typically drawn a distinction between primary emotions and secondary emotions. Primary emotions are unidimensional and elemental, evolutionarily adaptive, present early in life, and found across cultures (e.g., Fehr & Russell, 1984; Kemper, 1987; Shaver, Schwartz, Kirson, & O'Connor, 1987). Although taxonomies and terminologies differ, primary emotions tend to include (at a minimum) happiness, sadness, fear, and anger. Secondary emotions are either more nuanced versions of primary emotions or blend the elements thereof, and they are more socially constructed in terms of labels and meanings (e.g., Fehr & Russell, 1984; Kemper, 1987; Shaver et al., 1987). For example, pride can be viewed as a more nuanced version of happiness (Kemper, 1987; Shaver et al., 1987), with grief viewed as a blend of sadness, fear, and anger (Kemper, 1987).

The focus of our theorizing is on longing, which is a secondary emotion. Shaver et al. (1987) asked participants to rate words by how likely it was that the word would be classified as an emotion. Happiness, sadness, fear, and anger were rated as particularly likely to be classified as emotions. Longing was rated one tier below those words, alongside pride, nervousness, hope, and insecurity. Fehr and Russell (1984) asked participants to list as many items in the category of "emotion" as they could. Happiness, sadness, fear, and anger were listed most frequently. Longing was listed several times but alongside hope, annoyance, irritation, and relief. Kemper (1987) viewed longing as a blend of sadness and happiness. Reisenzein (1994) categorized it as an emotion that crosses from displeasure to pleasure while ranging from low to moderate arousal. Against that backdrop, Holm (1999, 2001) described longing as a secondary emotion experienced as a need or desire for something missing—a yearning or a wistfulness.

Why might dwelling on a forgone professional identity trigger longing? We use Lazarus's (1991)

cognitive-motivational-relational theory to structure our arguments. This lens is ideal for our purposes because it explains how cognitions about a situation go on to trigger affect, what form that affect takes, and how behaviors might be triggered by that affect. Although Lazarus (1991) did not mention longing in his articulation of the theory, we extend his mechanisms to that emotion. According to the theory, individuals initially respond to situations by engaging in primary appraisal, which involves three questions: (a) is the situation relevant to one's goals? (b) how does it impact goal progress? and (c) what does it say about one's "place in the world" in terms of self-esteem, moral values, ideal behaviors, protection of others, and sense of meaning and purpose? The answer to the first question impacts whether emotions are experienced at all, as a situation irrelevant to goals will trigger few feelings. The answer to the second question impacts the overall valence of the emotion. The answer to the third question begins to distinguish among specific emotions, like happiness, sadness, fear, and anger. For example, sadness may be felt when a situation is relevant to goals, when it hinders those goals, and when it represents an irrevocable loss of something that encapsulates one's "place in the world" (Lazarus, 1991).

These aspects of primary appraisal can explain why dwelling on a forgone professional identity could trigger an emotional experience of some kind. So much of a person's life would be different if a forgone path had been pursued, making such thoughts relevant to all kinds of goals. Because different occupations bring different job characteristics, it is likely that the forgone path could have impacted some goals in a positive way and other goals in a negative way. Forgone identities are also salient to one's "place in the world," as different paths provide different levels of esteem, moral expression, idealism, ability to protect others, and clarity of purpose. Importantly, Obodaru (2017) noted that forgone identities are often linked to values that have gone unfulfilled. It is that lack of fulfillment that makes them salient to the employee and preoccupies them during quiet moments at work or at home.

Although dwelling on a forgone professional identity might trigger an emotional experience of some kind, that experience will not necessarily be one of longing. We therefore turn to the secondary appraisal aspect of cognitive-motivational-relational theory (Lazarus, 1991). Secondary appraisal is responsible for producing more nuanced feelings and also consists of three questions: (a) is there someone who can be given blame or credit for the situation? (b) is there the potential to cope with the situation? and (c) is there an expectancy that the situation will change in the future? For example, sadness may be felt when no one is to blame for the situation, when the potential for coping is low, and when there is little expectancy that things will improve in the future.

These secondary appraisal questions can help explain the link between forgone identity dwelling and longing. In terms of blame, the notion that an identity was "forgone" implies that a decision was made not to pursue it (Obodaru, 2017). The ability to mentally undo that decision should encourage a sense of yearning for what could have been. In terms of potential for coping, Obodaru's (2017) qualitative study highlighted a number of ways that employees stayed connected to their forgone identity, including observing people who are currently working in those roles and imagining themselves in those roles. Such actions could trigger the happy wistfulness that is part of longing but should also provide an ongoing reminder that something is missing—that life remains incomplete. In terms of expectancy for the future, many employees may feel that the door is never completely shut on their forgone identity. Although a registered nurse could never again be a young oncologist fresh out of a top program, it would actually be possible to go back to school and enter that path later in life. That "crack of the door" should make longing more likely than something like sadness, which tends to be associated with an irrevocable loss (Lazarus, 1991).

The Behavioral Implications of Longing

Having described how forgone professional identities might result in longing, we turn our attention to the kinds of behaviors that could result from that feeling. Cognitive-motivational-relational theory also provides mechanisms that can explain the behavioral effects of emotions (Lazarus, 1991). According to the theory, each emotion is associated with a specific action tendency. Action tendencies are the physiological energy—the impulse or readiness—generated by an emotion (Frijda, 1987). Lazarus (1991) provided action tendencies for a number of emotions. For example, sadness should result in withdrawal—a pulling away and retreating from the world. As another example, happiness should result in expansiveness—a desire to approach and explore. Lazarus's (1991) theorizing has been supported by empirical research on action tendencies. For example, Frijda (1987) illustrated that sadness is associated with

avoidance, apathy, and unresponsiveness, and happiness is associated with a generalized readiness and a desire to stay in the proximity of relevant stimuli (see also Roseman, Wiest, & Swartz, 1994). Of course, the implications of happiness and sadness are more complex when the dependent variables are judgments and cognitions rather than behaviors (e.g., Ambady & Gray, 2002; Bodenhausen, Kramer, & Süsser, 1994; Raghunathan & Pham, 1999; Storbeck & Clore, 2005).

As a blend of sadness and happiness (Kemper, 1987; Reisenzein, 1994), the action tendencies associated with longing are likely to be complex. Longing was not included in Lazarus's (1991) articulation of cognitive-motivational-relational theory, however, nor was it included in a more extensive empirical study of action tendencies (Frijda, 1987). That said, we theorize that the sadness aspect of longing will create an action tendency with an avoidance component. The more an employee longs for something, the less grounded and engaged they should be in the present. Some ways for that to manifest are in tendencies to daydream, act distracted, take unnecessary breaks, and stay home from work altogether. Those sorts of behaviors all fall under the withdrawal behavior construct (Fox & Spector, 1999; Hanisch & Hulin, 1990).

That same action tendency should also manifest in a reduction of positive behaviors. We focused on helping behavior in our study because it is a key driver of group performance, especially when group members are interdependent on one another (Bachrach, Powell, Collins, & Richey, 2006). In order for an employee to help a colleague, the employee has to notice the need for help, assess the circumstances surrounding the need, decide whether to help, and engage in the physical act of aiding (LePine & Van Dyne, 2001). The more avoidant an employee is, the less likely they should be to engage in the steps in that process. Because their longing has pulled them away from the here and now, they should aid colleagues with heavy workloads less frequently, orient new employees less intensely, and work through others' problems less effortfully. Combining these predictions with our expected relationship between forgone identity dwelling and longing, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 1. Forgone identity dwelling has a positive indirect effect on withdrawal behavior through longing.

Hypothesis 2. Forgone identity dwelling has a negative indirect effect on helping behavior through longing.

We further theorize that the happiness aspect of longing creates an additional action tendency with an approach component. As positioned by Reisenzein (1994), longing ranges from slightly to moderately arousing. On the slighter end, its arousal is similar to that of sadness. On the more moderate end, however, longing closely matches the arousal levels of hope or envy. Hope and envy both possess approach action tendencies, encouraging a person to move toward a desired state or coveted object (Lazarus, 1991). For longing, we theorize that this arousal component may encourage movement toward attaining that for which one longs. As an example, longing for a place where someone once lived may lead to daydreaming about that place, but it may also encourage the person to physically visit that place.

This approach-oriented action tendency may also occur in the workplace, as one aspect of Obodaru's (2012, 2017) theorizing was the notion that thinking about a forgone identity could trigger job crafting (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001; Wrzesniewski, LoBuglio, Dutton, & Berg, 2013). At its core, job crafting is a self-oriented behavior that allows people to redefine their work boundaries (Berg, Dutton, & Wrzesniewski, 2013; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). If the forgone identity represents unfulfilled values, then current work roles could be tweaked to supply similar values. Berg, Grant, and Johnson (2010) argued something similar in their qualitative study of unanswered occupational callings. They theorized that job crafting could help employees incorporate some elements of their unanswered callings. From an identity construction perspective, such crafting could even represent a conscious or subconscious form of "identity play," where an employee experiments with provisional selves (Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2010). We therefore predict:

Hypothesis 3. Forgone identity dwelling has a positive indirect effect on job crafting through longing.

Crucially, as illustrated in Figure 1, we further theorize that any job crafting triggered by longing would itself reduce withdrawal behavior while increasing helping behavior. Research has shown that job crafting can have beneficial effects for employees by satisfying unmet needs (Rudolph, Katz, Lavigne, & Zacher, 2017; Vogel, Rodell, & Lynch, 2016). Most counterproductive behaviors are a reaction to some dissatisfying status quo (Robinson & Bennett, 1997). If job crafting can reduce such sentiments, then some of the triggers for withdrawal behavior would be removed. At the same time, any increased satisfaction from job crafting should increase helping

behavior. Such behaviors are often viewed as spontaneous or reasoned expressions of positive feelings (George & Brief, 1992; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000). In this way, longing would become a "double-edged sword" in terms of its behavioral implications. On the one hand, it could directly result in detrimental actions. On the other hand, it could trigger beneficial actions that ameliorate some of its negative consequences. We summarize those potential benefits by hypothesizing the "serial indirect effects"—indirect effects that are transmitted through a series of two mediators:

Hypothesis 4. Forgone identity dwelling has a negative serial indirect effect on withdrawal behavior through longing and job crafting.

Hypothesis 5. Forgone identity dwelling has a positive serial indirect effect on helping behavior through longing and job crafting.

Of course, different employees may react to longing in different ways. Although some employees may lack the belief that they can alter their working lives in any way, others may believe that they are in control—a belief that may influence the reaction to longing. We theorize that the locus of control can capture that critical distinction (Brewin & Shapiro, 1984; Levenson, 1974; Rotter, 1966). Employees with an internal locus of control believe they exercise control over their lives—with successes or failures due to their own actions or decisions. Employees with an external locus of control believe their lives are controlled by external forces—with chance or powerful others responsible for their successes and failures. Meta-analytic studies have shown that an internal locus of control is beneficial to a variety of outcomes, including well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Ng, Sorensen, & Eby, 2006).

We argue that employees with an internal locus of control should be more likely to react to longing with job crafting. Such employees believe they can determine what happens in their lives, that hard work can give them what they want, and that their fate is determined by their own actions (Levenson, 1974). Thus, when they feel longing, they should be more likely to contemplate job crafting—and more likely to do what is needed to execute it. Obodaru (2017) shared the story of a woman who worked to incorporate aspects of her forgone identity of lawyer into her current identity of researcher. This participant described her knack for working with intellectual property issues or writing release forms by saying, "I always wanted to be a lawyer, this is my chance!" (Obodaru, 2017: 537). Despite not knowing the participant's locus of control score, her internal mindset is evident in her sentiment.

In contrast, we expect employees with an external locus of control to be less likely to react to longing with job crafting. Such employees tend to feel that their fate is determined by chance or by powerful others (Levenson, 1974). Such employees would likely view their job tasks as being dictated by their supervisor or by whoever created their job description. Alternatively, such employees might view their current job duties or work projects as the luck of the draw and more passively wait for tasks to simply change on their own. Indeed, the mere possibility of job crafting might not occur to external locus employees because it requires a "take-charge" mindset that may not be second nature to them (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). We therefore expect an internal locus of control to amplify the longing to job crafting relationship.

Hypothesis 6. The positive relationship between longing and job crafting is moderated by the locus of control, such that the relationship is more positive for employees with an internal locus than for employees with an external locus.

STUDY 1: METHODS

Sample and Procedure

Examining the effects of forgone identity dwelling on employee emotions and behaviors requires a sample with sufficient variance in professions. To create a sample with such variance, we took two approaches. First, we posted online classified ads in 10 major metropolitan areas in the United States. The ads indicated an opportunity to participate in research in exchange for a gift card credit, so long as the person worked at least 30 hours a week and had coworkers willing to participate. Second, we contacted members and alumni of executive and professional master's programs at a large southeastern university. Those emails indicated the same opportunity, subject to the same eligibility criteria. All participants were paid $10 per survey, including the focal employees and their coworkers. A total of 528 employees registered for the survey, with 429 recruited through the online classified ads and 99 recruited through the master's programs. A dummy variable capturing this source distinction did not alter the pattern of our results, so the two sources were combined into a single data set. When asked

how many research studies the employees had participated in previously, the mode was 0 and the mean was .99.

Our design used time separation and source separation for many of our linkages in an effort to combat common method bias (Doty & Glick, 1998; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Specifically, we employed a design with four time periods and two sources. Time periods were separated by three weeks, which should prevent employees from remembering their specific responses to the prior survey (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

In the registration survey, employees were provided with the prompt below to identify both their current and forgone identities (for similar language, see Obodaru, 2017). Given a potentially negative valence for the term "forgone," we used the synonym "alternative" instead. Table 1 provides a sample of the labels employees provided for their current and forgone professional identities.

> People's career paths often include key decision points—moments where "the road taken" diverges away from "the road not taken." As you look back on your career path up till now, what is the most salient "road not taken" for you? In the space below, write down the job, position, or occupation you might have had if a key decision point had gone another way. Please note that the term you write below will be used in places on the surveys you will complete to refer to that "road not taken." We will also sometimes refer to this as your "alternative identity."

TABLE 1
Labels Used by Employees for Current and Forgone Identities in Study 1

Current Identity	Forgone Identity
Social worker	Veterinarian
Financial reporter	Fund manager
Truck driver	Plumber
Educator	Children's author
Architect	Painter
Corporate events producer	Environmental attorney
Small business owner	Linguist
Retail shift manager	Occupational therapist
Medical technician	Chemical engineer
E-commerce specialist	Professor
Scientific researcher	Doctor
Clerk	Chef
Realtor	Broker
Teacher	Photographer
Certified nurse aid	Pharmacist
Nail technician	Model
Registered nurse	Oncologist
Human resources employee	Pastry chef
Network specialist	Lawyer
Graphic artist	Police officer

Notes: The instructions noted that "People's career paths often include key decision points—moments where 'the road taken' diverges away from 'the road not taken.'" Employees were then asked for a label that encompasses "the job, position, or occupation that you currently have—that represents 'the road taken.'" They were also asked for a label that encompasses "the most salient 'road not taken.'"

At Time 1, employees were surveyed about their forgone identity dwelling and locus of control. They were also surveyed about their current identity life satisfaction and their forgone identity life satisfaction for use as controls. Of the 528 employees who registered for the study, 458 filled out the first survey. At Time 2, 444 employees completed a measure of longing, along with measures of sadness and happiness for use as controls. At Time 3, 434 employees completed a measure of job crafting. At Time 4, coworkers were surveyed about employee withdrawal behavior and helping behavior. Employees had been asked to provide the contact information for two coworkers during the registration survey and to indicate how many days a week they worked in the same physical location. We sent the survey to the coworker they worked with more often to maximize the opportunity to observe withdrawal behavior and helping behavior. Time 4 was completed by 364 coworkers.

Listwise deletion of missing data resulted in a sample of 348 employee–coworker dyads. We used various screening methods to ensure the quality of our data. Careless respondent checks were embedded in the normal flow of items and asked participants to choose a particular response (e.g., "Please select 'very often'"; Meade & Craig, 2012). We excluded 12 participants for missing two or more of these attention checks. Short response times may also indicate poor data quality, with long times indicating the participant may have stepped away from a survey and returned later (Meade & Craig, 2012). We excluded nine participants for taking an unusual amount of time to complete a survey. In the first survey, participants were asked to describe their forgone identity and their current identity in detail. We excluded 11 participants who wrote fewer than 50 words for either prompt or who did not write about professional, occupational, job, or position-based identities. As a result of these data screening procedures, we had a final usable sample size of 316 dyads (60% of the 528 employees registered).

Employees had an average age of 38.04 years ($SD = 8.25$) and an average tenure of 7.23 years in their current organization ($SD = 5.56$). Forty-seven

percent of employees were male, and 53% of employees were female. Eighty percent of employees were Caucasian, 8% were African American, 6% were Asian, and 4% were Hispanic or Latino, with the remainder reporting other or mixed ethnicity. Coworkers had an average age of 39.13 years ($SD = 8.56$) and had worked with the employees for an average of 4.16 years ($SD = 3.24$). Forty-nine percent of coworkers were male, and 51% of coworkers were female. Seventy-six percent of coworkers were Caucasian, 8% were African American, 7% were Asian, and 7% were Hispanic or Latino, with the remainder reporting other or mixed ethnicity.

Measures

Unless otherwise noted, all measures used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Forgone identity dwelling. We measured the frequency with which employees think about their forgone identity at Time 1 using three items created for this study. All items began with "Regarding the possibility of being a [forgone identity], how often do you. . ." and provided anchors ranging from 1 (*almost never*) to 5 (*almost always*). The items included "think about your alternative self?" "contemplate how life would be had you chosen the 'road not taken'?" and "reflect on how things would have been different?" ($\alpha = .91$).

We content-validated our measure of forgone identity dwelling using Hinkin and Tracey's (1999) approach. This approach examines whether a scale's items correspond to a construct's definition and whether they do so in a manner that exceeds definitions of other orbiting constructs. We followed the guidelines created by Colquitt, Sabey, Rodell, and Hill (2019), who created specific statistics for Hinkin and Tracey's (1999) approach and who compiled norms for those statistics by analyzing measures from top journals. We gathered data from 178 participants using Amazon's Mechanical Turk (Paolacci & Chandler, 2014). We excluded 18 participants for taking an unusual amount of time to complete the survey, resulting in a final usable sample size of 160 participants (90% of the 178 participants registered).

Colquitt et al. (2019) introduced two statistics for applying Hinkin and Tracey's (1999) approach. The first is *htc*, which is an index of definitional correspondence. For this statistic, participants were supplied with the forgone identity dwelling definition in bold and asked to rate the forgone identity dwelling items on a scale from 1 (*item does an* ***EXTREMELY BAD*** *job of measuring the* ***bolded*** *concept provided above*) to 7 (*item does an* ***EXTREMELY GOOD*** *job of measuring the* ***bolded*** *concept provided above*). The *htc* statistic is derived from averaging those ratings across scale items before adjusting for the number of anchors. The statistic would have a value of 1.00 if all participants gave the maximum rating for all items. Our data yielded an *htc* of .88, which is viewed as "strong" according to Colquitt et al.'s (2019) norms. The second is *htd*, which is an index of definitional distinctiveness. This statistic requires asking participants to rate the forgone identity dwelling items against the definitions of two orbiting constructs using the same 7-point rating scale. In choosing those constructs, Colquitt et al. (2019) suggested choosing venerable constructs, constructs that do not have a "part–whole" relationship with the focal one, and constructs that utilize the same referent. We chose disappointment and daydreaming as our orbiting constructs. The *htd* statistic is derived from comparing a scale's correspondence with the intended definition and its correspondence with the orbiting definitions before adjusting for the number of anchors. We used Van Dijk and Van der Pligt's (1997) definition of disappointment and Valkenburg and Van der Voort's (1994) definition of daydreaming. The *htd* statistic has a positive value when items receive higher ratings on the intended definition than the orbiting definitions and a negative value when the reverse is true. Our data yielded an *htd* of .27, which is considered "strong" based on Colquitt et al.'s (2019) norms.

Locus of control. We measured the locus of control at Time 1 using seven items taken from Levenson (1974). The items included: "I can pretty much determine what will happen in my life," "When I get what I want, it's usually because I worked hard for it," and "How many friends I have depends on how nice a person I am" ($\alpha = .72$). We excluded an item from the original scale ("I am usually able to protect my personal interests") due to cross loadings on other constructs in our confirmatory factor analysis.

Longing. We measured longing at Time 2 using three items created for this study. The items began with "Over the past few weeks, when reflecting on how things are for me, I have . . ." and included the following: "longed for what could have been," "yearned for how things could have turned out," and "been wistful for what could have happened" ($\alpha = .96$).

We content-validated this scale using the same data collection effort used for the forgone identity dwelling scale. Participants were supplied with our longing definition in bold and then asked to rate our longing items using the same 7-point scale. Our data

yielded an *htc* of .87, which is considered "strong" (Colquitt et al., 2019). For the purposes of calculating *htd*, we chose sadness and happiness as our orbiting constructs. Although that choice goes against Colquitt et al.'s (2019) suggestion to avoid "part–whole" relationships, we wanted to verify that our longing items were definitionally distinct from the primary underlying emotions (Kemper, 1987). We relied on Lazarus's (1991) definitions for both constructs. Our data yielded an *htd* of .40, which is considered "very strong" (Colquitt et al., 2019).

Because longing is a blend of sadness and happiness (Kemper, 1987), we decided to model it alongside those two primary emotions in our hypothesis testing. We therefore included Fredrickson, Tugade, Waugh, and Larkin's (2003) measures at Time 2. All items used the same lead-in as the longing items. Sadness was measured with three items, including "sad," "downhearted," and "unhappy" ($\alpha = .88$). Happiness was also measured with three items, including "happy," "joyful," and "glad" ($\alpha = .91$).

Job crafting. We measured job crafting at Time 3 using Niessen, Weseler, and Kostova's (2016) three-item task crafting scale. The items began with "During the past few weeks, in order to make it so that the job I do suits me . . ." and included the following: "I worked more intensively on tasks I enjoyed," "I concentrated more on work tasks that I like," and "I undertook or looked for additional tasks that match my interests" ($\alpha = .86$).

Withdrawal behavior. We measured coworker perceptions of employee withdrawal behavior at Time 4 using five items from Fox and Spector's (1999) scale. The items began with "During the last few weeks, how often did [employee name] . . ." and used anchors ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*a great deal*). The items included the following: "come to work or back from breaks late," "stay home from work when [they] didn't need to," and "distract someone from doing their work" ($\alpha = .87$).

Helping behavior. We measured coworker perceptions of helping behavior at Time 4 using four items taken from Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, and Fetter (1990). The items began with "During the last few weeks, how often did [employee name] . . ." and used anchors ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*a great deal*). The items included the following: "willingly help others who had work-related problems," "seem ready to lend a helping hand to those around [them]," and "help orient new people even though it was not required" ($\alpha = .91$). We excluded an item from the original scale ("help others who had heavy workloads") due to cross loadings on other constructs in our confirmatory factor analysis.

Control Variables

Forgone identity life satisfaction. One reason that employees may dwell on forgone identities is that they presume that their satisfaction with their lives would have been high had they pursued those identities. If so, it becomes important to separate the specific effects of dwelling from the more general effects of potential satisfaction with the "road not taken." We therefore modeled forgone identity life satisfaction as a control in linkages involving forgone identity dwelling, longing, sadness, and happiness. At Time 1, we measured the life satisfaction employees believe they would have experienced in their forgone identities using adaptations of four items from Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985). All items began with "If I were living my alternative identity of [identity label] . . .," and sample items included the following: "in most ways my life would be close to ideal" and "I would be satisfied with my life" ($\alpha = .88$).

Current identity life satisfaction. Another reason that employees may dwell on forgone identities is that their experienced satisfaction with their current lives is low. If so, it becomes important to separate the specific effects of dwelling from the more general effects of satisfaction with the "road taken." Thus, we also modeled current identity life satisfaction as a control in linkages involving forgone identity dwelling, longing, sadness, and happiness. Current identity life satisfaction was measured at Time 1 using adaptations of the same four Diener et al. (1985) items. They began with "As I live my current identity of [identity label] . . .," and sample items included the following: "in most ways my life is close to ideal" and "I am satisfied with my life" ($\alpha = .86$).

Trait affectivity. Research has shown that trait dispositions can influence how individuals experience positive and negative emotions (Larsen & Ketelaar, 1991). In addition, meta-analyses have revealed associations between trait negative affectivity and withdrawal behavior (Kaplan, Bradley, Luchman, & Haynes, 2009) and trait positive affectivity and helping behavior (Organ & Ryan, 1995). We therefore modeled trait negative affectivity as a control in linkages involving sadness, longing, job crafting, and withdrawal behavior. We modeled trait positive affectivity as a control in linkages involving happiness, longing, job crafting, and helping behavior. Trait negative affectivity was measured in the registration survey using 10 items from the PANAS (Watson & Clark,

1994). The items began with "In general, I tend to feel . . ." and included "upset" and "afraid" (α = .94). Trait positive affectivity was also measured in the registration survey using 10 items from the PANAS (Watson & Clark, 1994), with those items including "enthusiastic" and "active" (α = .83).

Proactive personality. Meta-analysis has also revealed that people with a proactive personality are more likely to engage in job crafting (Rudolph et al., 2017). We therefore modeled proactive personality as a control in linkages involving job crafting. We measured proactive personality at Time 1 using 10 items from Bateman and Crant's (1993) measure. The items included "I excel at identifying opportunities" and "I love being a champion for my ideas, even against others' opposition" (α = .86).

Intrinsic motivation. Employees who find their current work tasks inherently enjoyable or interesting may have less need to job craft, regardless of any emotions triggered by forgone identities. We therefore modeled intrinsic motivation as a control in linkages involving job crafting. We measured intrinsic motivation at Time 1 using four items from Guay, Vallerand, and Blanchard (2000). Employees were asked why they are motivated to do their work, with items including "because I think the work is interesting" and "because I think the work is pleasant" (α = .93).

Forgone timing. It is possible that the timing of a forgone identity may influence the intensity of forgone identity dwelling. A fork in the road that occurred before a current job began may seem less salient than a fork in the road that occurred in the midst of one's job. We therefore modeled forgone timing as a control in linkages involving forgone identity dwelling. In the registration survey, we asked participants to indicate the timing of when the "fork in the road" occurred for their forgone identity (0 = *after current job began*; 1 = *before current job began*).

Demographics. Two demographic variables may also influence the intensity of forgone identity dwelling: socioeconomic status and education. Employees with a low socioeconomic status may be more inclined to think about "the road not taken" than people with a high socioeconomic status, given that their chosen path has not proven lucrative. Similarly, employees without a college degree may dwell on forgone identities more than those with a college degree, as they likely possess fewer current employment options. We therefore controlled for socioeconomic status and education in linkages involving forgone identity dwelling. In the registration survey, we asked participants for their socioeconomic status (1 = *working poor*; 2 = *working class*; 3 = *lower middle class*; 4 = *upper middle class*; 5 = *upper class*) and for their level of education (0 = *no college degree*; 1 = *college degree*).

STUDY 1: RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 provides the means, standard deviations, and correlations among our variables. Those results begin to establish some nomological network for forgone identity dwelling. Specifically, dwelling was positively correlated with forgone identity life satisfaction ($r = .40$) and negatively correlated with current identity life satisfaction ($r = -.19$). The more attractive the road not taken might have been and the less attractive the road taken has been, the more employees dwelled on their forgone professional identities. In addition, such dwelling occurred more frequently for employees with a low socioeconomic status ($r = -.11$) and no college education ($r = -.16$). It may be that those employees are less able to compensate for any perceived weaknesses in a chosen career path. Finally, forgone identity dwelling was not related to any of the dispositional variables we collected, including locus of control, trait positive and negative affectivity, or proactive personality.

Measurement Model Fitting

We used structural equation modeling in Mplus 8.30 to test our hypotheses (Muthén & Muthén, 2017). We first tested our measurement model, where all eight of our latent variables were modeled with item-level indicators. Two scale items had significant cross loadings with other latent variables and were therefore dropped, as described in our Measures section. The resulting measurement model provided acceptable fit to the data: χ^2 (406) = 1006.62, $p = .000$; comparative fit index (CFI) = .91; standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = .06. The standardized factor loadings for the 31 items averaged .77, with only three loadings below .50.

Structural Model Testing

We tested our theoretical model using a partially latent approach, assigning scale scores as single indicators of the latent variable with factor loadings set to the square root of reliability and error variances set to (1 – reliability) * variance (Kline, 2005). The terms for the longing × locus of control product were set in the same fashion, with its reliability computed following Cortina, Chen, and Dunlap (2001).

TABLE 2
Correlations and Descriptive Statistics for Study 1

Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1. Forgone identity dwelling	2.95	.88	–															
2. Longing	3.11	1.31	.41**	–														
3. Sadness	1.99	.93	.26**	.01	–													
4. Happiness	3.81	.92	–.09	.31**	–.62**	–												
5. Job crafting	3.78	.85	.14*	.47**	–.29**	.53**	–											
6. Withdrawal behavior	1.50	.75	.17**	.02	.44**	–.34**	–.26**	–										
7. Helping behavior	5.11	1.28	.10	.02	–.01	.17**	.35**	–.26**	–									
8. Internal locus of control	3.76	.54	.08	.29**	–.34**	.42**	.36**	–.24**	.15**	–								
9. Forgone identity life satisfaction	3.61	.84	.40**	.54**	–.01	.18**	.32**	–.02	–.02	.27**	–							
10. Current identity life satisfaction	3.62	.75	–.19**	–.28**	–.26**	.29**	.09	–.19**	.21**	.27**	–.16**	–						
11. Socioeconomic status	3.12	.92	–.11*	–.43**	.13*	–.18**	–.15**	.05	.25**	–.05	–.25**	.38**	–					
12. Education	0.85	.36	–.16**	.07	–.14*	.24**	.18**	–.08	.09	.13*	–.01	.16**	.23**	–				
13. Forgone timing	.81	.39	–.10	.06	–.13*	.10	.07	–.14*	–.02	–.05	.01	–.02	–.09	.16**	–			
14. Trait negative affectivity	1.76	.77	.08	–.18**	.55**	–.51**	–.27**	.44**	–.14*	–.36**	–.17**	–.17**	.15**	–.11*	.07	–		
15. Trait positive affectivity	4.06	.52	.07	.00	–.29**	.39**	.26**	–.27**	.33**	.42**	.05	.45**	.21**	.10	–.11	–.40**	–	
16. Proactive personality	3.92	.57	.06	.14*	–.30**	.43**	.41**	–.26**	.33**	.48**	.12*	.33**	.08	.16**	–.12*	–.39**	.73**	–
17. Intrinsic motivation	4.02	.93	–.10	.20**	–.39**	.59**	.41**	–.33**	.20**	.38**	.10	.47**	–.14*	.24**	.04	–.42**	.43**	.39**

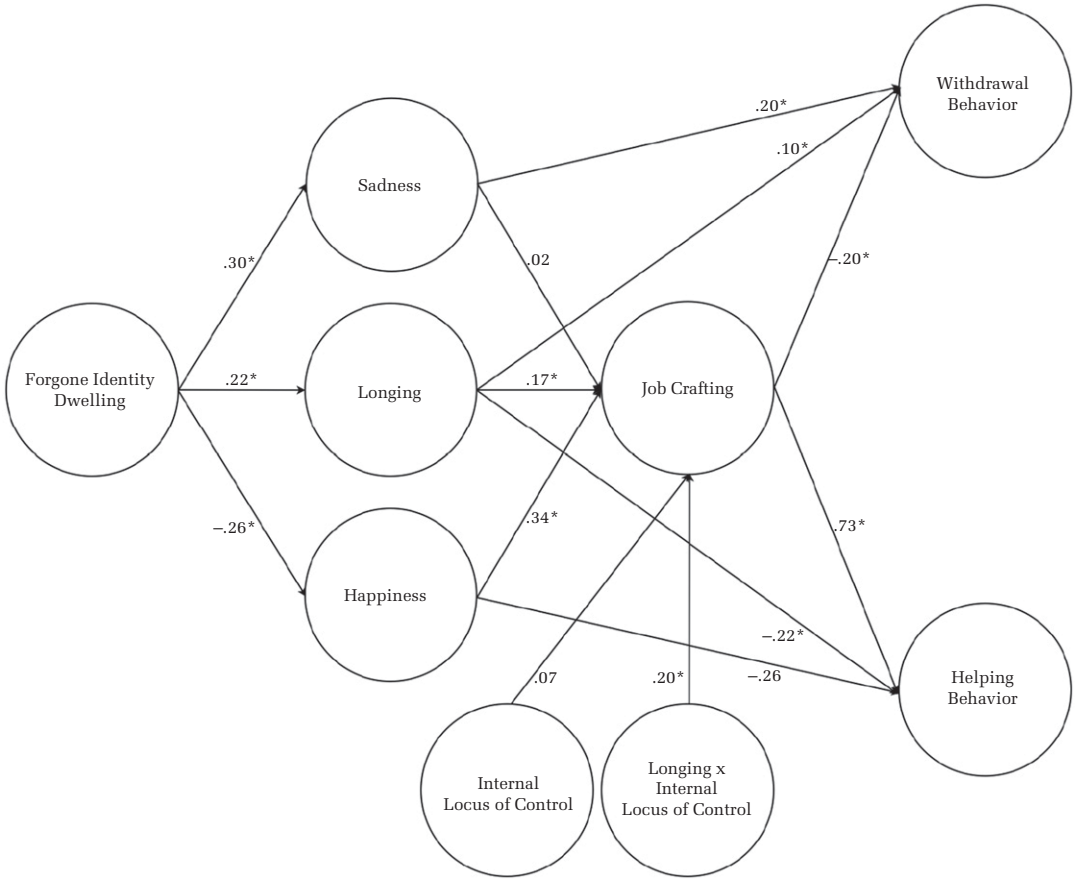
Note: $n = 316$. Tests are two-tailed.
* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$

We centered the longing and locus of control variables before creating the product term (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). The model shown in Figure 2 was supplemented with additional paths that are necessary for hypothesis testing but too complex to be drawn. As described in the notes for Figure 2, those included direct effects of forgone identity dwelling on job crafting, withdrawal behavior, and helping behavior. Such paths make our hypothesis tests more conservative while allowing for decomposition of direct and indirect effects (MacKinnon, Lockwood, Hoffman, West, & Sheets, 2002). We also allowed the disturbance terms for longing, sadness, and happiness to covary given that all are indicative of more general employee affect. Likewise, we allowed the disturbance terms for withdrawal behavior and helping behavior to covary as both are indicative of more general coworker perceptions of performance. Finally, we included the control variable effects that were described in our Control Variables section. Table 3 summarizes the placement of those control variables. Note that the inclusion of these control variables did not influence the pattern or statistical significance of our hypothesis tests. The resulting model exhibited an acceptable fit to the data: χ^2 (56) = 261.50, $p = .000$; CFI = .90; SRMR = .06.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that forgone identity dwelling would have a positive indirect effect on withdrawal behavior through longing. As shown in Figure 2, forgone identity dwelling was indeed positively related to longing ($\beta = .22$, $p < .01$). Longing, in turn, was indeed positively related to withdrawal behavior ($\beta = .10$, $p < .05$). To test the indirect effect of forgone identity dwelling on withdrawal behavior through longing, we used the BOOTSTRAP option within Mplus to construct confidence intervals, with 10,000 as the number of samples. We used the MODEL INDIRECT command to define the indirect effect. The indirect effect of forgone identity dwelling on withdrawal behavior through longing was indeed positive and statistically significant (unstandardized indirect effect = .02, 95% CI [.002, .061]). Hypothesis 1 was therefore supported.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that forgone identity dwelling would have a negative indirect effect on helping behavior through longing. Longing was indeed negatively related to helping behavior ($\beta = -.22$, $p < .01$). The indirect effect of forgone identity dwelling on helping behavior through longing was negative and statistically significant (unstandardized indirect effect = −.05, 95% CI [–.138, −.003]). Hypothesis 2 was therefore supported.

FIGURE 2
Unstandardized Mplus Results for Study 1



Notes: Additional direct effects are included but not drawn. For forgone identity dwelling, they include .05 on job crafting, .04 on withdrawal behavior, and .16 on helping behavior. A number of control variable effects are included but not drawn. For forgone identity life satisfaction, they include .50* on forgone identity dwelling, –.14* on sadness, .78* on longing, and .39* on happiness. For current identity life satisfaction, they include –.19* on forgone identity dwelling, –.22* on sadness, –.43* on longing, and .17 on happiness. For socioeconomic status, they include .14* on forgone identity dwelling. For education (college vs. no college), they include –.43* on forgone identity dwelling. For forgone timing (before current job versus not), they include –.20 on forgone identity dwelling. For trait negative affectivity, they include .49* on sadness, –.02 on longing, .11 on job crafting, and .30* on withdrawal behavior. For trait positive affectivity, they include .69* on happiness, .32 on longing, –.28 on job crafting, and .80* on helping behavior. For proactive personality, they include .53* on job crafting. For intrinsic motivation, they include .12 on job crafting. Exogenous covariances are included but not drawn. For forgone identity life satisfaction, they include –.11* with current identity life satisfaction, .17* with internal locus of control, .13* with the longing × internal locus of control product term, –.24* with socioeconomic status, .00 with education (college vs. no college), .01 with forgone timing (before current job vs. not), –.13* with trait negative affectivity, .02 with trait positive affectivity, .07* with proactive personality, and .11* with intrinsic motivation. For current identity life satisfaction, they include .14* with internal locus of control, –.08* with the longing x internal locus of control product term, .30* with socioeconomic status, .05* with education (college vs. no college), –.01 with forgone timing (before current job vs. not), –.11* with trait negative affectivity, .21* with trait positive affectivity, .16* with proactive personality, and .37* with intrinsic motivation. For internal locus of control, they include –.03 with the longing × internal locus of control product term, –.03 with socioeconomic status, .03* with education (college vs. no college), –.01 with forgone timing (before current job vs. not), –.18* with trait negative affectivity, .15* with trait positive affectivity, .18* with proactive personality, and .23* with intrinsic motivation. For the longing × internal locus of control product term, they include –.11* with socioeconomic status, .06* with education (college vs. no college), .08* with forgone timing (before current job vs. not), –.09* with trait negative affectivity, –.03 with trait positive affectivity, –.01 with proactive personality, and .10* with intrinsic motivation. For socioeconomic status, they include .08* with education (college vs. no college), –.03 with forgone timing (before current job vs. not), .12* with trait negative affectivity, .11* with trait positive affectivity, .05 with proactive personality, and –.13* with intrinsic motivation. For education (college vs. no college), they include .03* with forgone timing (before current job vs. not), –.03 with trait negative affectivity, .03* with trait positive affectivity, .04* with proactive personality, and .09* with intrinsic motivation. For forgone timing (before current job vs. not), they include .02 with trait negative affectivity, –.02 with trait positive affectivity, –.03* with proactive personality, and .02 with intrinsic motivation. For trait negativity affectivity, they include –.19* with trait positive affectivity, –.19* with proactive personality, and –.32 with intrinsic motivation. For trait positive affectivity, they include .25* with proactive personality and .25* with intrinsic motivation. For proactive personality, they include .23* with intrinsic motivation. Exogenous covariances were also included between the disturbance terms for longing and sadness (–.01), longing and happiness (.29*), sadness and happiness (–.28*), and withdrawal behavior and helping behavior (−.14*).
* $p < .05$

TABLE 3
Control Variable Placement in Study 1

Control Variable	Forgone Identity Dwelling	Sadness	Longing	Happiness	Job Crafting	Withdrawal	Helping
Forgone identity life satisfaction	X	X	X	X			
Current identity life satisfaction	X	X	X	X			
Socioeconomic status	X						
Education	X						
Forgone timing	X						
Trait negative affectivity		X	X		X	X	
Trait positive affectivity			X	X	X		X
Proactive personality					X		
Intrinsic motivation					X		

Hypothesis 3 predicted that forgone identity dwelling would have a positive indirect effect on job crafting through longing. Longing was indeed positively related to job crafting ($\beta = .17$, $p < .01$). The indirect effect of forgone identity dwelling on job crafting through longing was positive and statistically significant (unstandardized indirect effect = .04, 95% CI [.003, .101]). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was supported.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that forgone identity dwelling would have a negative serial indirect effect on withdrawal behavior through longing and job crafting. Job crafting was negatively related to withdrawal behavior ($\beta = -.20$, $p < .01$). The serial indirect effect of forgone identity dwelling on withdrawal behavior was indeed negative and statistically significant (unstandardized indirect effect = −.01, 95% CI [−.026, −.001]). Hypothesis 4 was therefore supported.

Hypothesis 5 predicted that forgone identity dwelling would have a positive serial indirect effect on helping behavior through longing and job crafting. Job crafting was positively related to helping behavior ($\beta = .73$, $p < .01$). The serial indirect effect of forgone identity dwelling on helping behavior was indeed positive and statistically significant (unstandardized indirect effect = .03, 95% CI [.002, .083]). Thus, Hypothesis 5 was supported.

Hypothesis 6 predicted that the positive relationship between longing and job crafting would be moderated by the locus of control, such that the relationship would be more positive for employees with an internal locus than for employees with an external locus. As shown in Figure 2, the longing × locus of control product term had a significant relationship with job crafting when modeled alongside its two latent components ($\beta = .20$, $p < .05$). We conducted a log-likelihood difference test to assess the contribution to our model when the path from the product term to job crafting was included. This model comparison produced a −2 log-likelihood difference (1) = 5.64, $p < .05$. That result suggested that the model including the product term path provided a significantly better fit than the model excluding the product term path. We plotted the interaction using the intercept and regression weights from the manifest data, with that pattern shown in Figure 3. We also conducted simple slopes analysis to provide additional probing of the interaction (Cohen et al., 2003). As predicted, the relationship between longing and job crafting was more positive for employees with an internal locus ($\beta = .25$, $p < .001$) than for employees with an external locus ($\beta = .11$, $p < .05$), with those slopes being statistically significantly different (β difference = .14, $p < .01$). Hypothesis 6 was therefore supported.

STUDY 2: INTRODUCTION

Study 1 revealed that forgone identity dwelling is positively associated with longing and that longing could have detrimental associations in terms of both increased withdrawal behavior and decreased helping behavior. Job crafting, however, may play a pivotal role in ameliorating some of those detrimental associations. When accounting for its serial indirect effects through longing and job crafting, forgone identity dwelling wound up having beneficial effects on both of our outcomes. In addition, our results showed that the relationship between longing and job crafting was more positive for internal locus of control employees, who should be more likely to contemplate job crafting and more willing to do what is needed to execute it.

Of course, those relationships were tested using self-report measures of forgone identity dwelling and longing using correlational data. Although

FIGURE 3
Longing × Locus of Control Interaction in Study 1

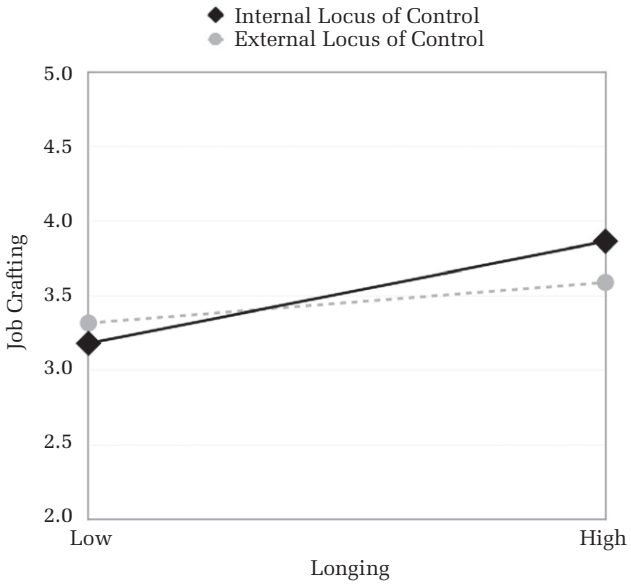


Figure 2 relied on both temporal and source separation and involved a number of control variables, that design cannot rule out several threats to internal validity. We therefore sought to replicate the most central linkages in Figure 2—between forgone identity dwelling and longing and between longing and job crafting—using a design that would allow for more causal inferences. To do so, we utilized Spencer et al.'s (2005) experimental-causal-chain approach. Here, indirect effects are broken down into their component segments, with each segment tested using an experiment with random assignment. In Study 2a, we manipulated forgone identity dwelling to test its effect on longing. In Study 2b, we manipulated longing to test its effects on intentions to job craft. We also measured locus of control to assess its moderating role in the longing to job crafting relationship.

STUDY 2A: METHODS

Sample and Procedure

We recruited 207 participants from Amazon's Mechanical Turk (Paolacci & Chandler, 2014), with the stipulation that they were full-time employees who worked at least 30 hours a week. In order to maximize the likelihood that participants would have a forgone professional identity, we required participants to be between the ages of 30 and 45. All participants were offered $2.00 for what was advertised as a 20-minute time commitment. Participants were provided with the same prompt used in Study 1 to identify their current and forgone identities. Table 4 provides a sample of the labels that the participants provided for those identities.

TABLE 4
Labels Used by Employees for Current and Forgone Identities in Study 2a

Current Identity	Forgone Identity
Writer	Counselor
Engineering tech	Chef
Media specialist	Designer
Database administrator	Accountant
Process technician	Drafter
Transcriptionist	Game designer
Network engineer	Machinist
Health services	Musician
Barista	Florist
Political field manager	Attorney
Retail engraver	Website designer
Sleep tech	Software engineer
Freelance writer	Mortuary science
Accountant	History teacher
Ads assessor	Photographer
Elder care worker	Software developer
Instructional designer	Video game designer
Insurance sales	Music producer
Financial planner	Geneticist
Carpenter	Welder

Notes: The instructions noted that "People's career paths often include key decision points—moments where 'the road taken' diverges away from 'the road not taken.'" Employees were then asked for a label that encompasses "the job, position, or occupation that you currently have—that represents 'the road taken.'" They were also asked for a label that encompasses "the most salient 'road not taken.'"

Forgone identity dwelling was manipulated using a writing reflection exercise with participants randomly assigned to conditions. In the forgone dwelling condition, the manipulation read as follows:

> You indicated that you have an alternative identity of [identity label]. We're going to ask you to dwell on that alternative identity for the next several moments. Please think about that alternative self. Please contemplate how life would have been had you chosen that "road not taken." Please reflect on how things would have been different. In short, dwell on your alternative identity of [identity label].
>
> In the space below, please write at least five sentences about your alternative identity of [identity label]. Describe your thoughts on that alternative self. Describe your contemplations on how life would

have been. Describe your reflections on how things might have been different. Please remember to write at least five sentences.

For the control condition, we wrote a stimulus that was rooted more in the "here and now" than our dwelling prompt. Following an example from previous research, we asked participants to think about what had happened in their day so far (Sherman et al., 2013). The manipulation read as follows:

> We're going to ask you to think about your day for the next several moments. Please think about what you've done so far today. Recall the things—large or small—that have happened. Remember the events—major or minor—that have occurred. In short, think about your day thus far.
>
> In the space below, please write at least five sentences about your day. Describe what you've done so far, the things that have happened, and the events that have occurred. Please remember to write at least five sentences.

Once the writing reflections were complete, we surveyed participants about forgone identity dwelling and longing. In the interest of consistency across studies, we also included a number of additional variables from Study 1. Those included forgone identity life satisfaction, current identity life satisfaction, sadness, happiness, socioeconomic status, education, forgone timing, trait negative affectivity, trait positive affectivity, proactive personality, and intrinsic motivation. Given our use of random assignment, however, none of these variables altered the tests of our model linkages. They are therefore excluded from our results.

We again used various screening methods to ensure the quality of our data. We excluded four participants for missing attention checks (Meade & Craig, 2012), 11 participants for taking an unusual amount of time to complete the survey, and nine participants who did not follow the writing prompt instructions. As a result of those data screening procedures, we had a final usable sample size of 183 employees (88% of the 207 participants registered). Participants had an average age of 36.73 years ($SD = 4.04$) and an average tenure of 6.08 years in their current organizations ($SD = 4.36$). Fifty-eight percent of participants were male, and 41% of participants were female, with the remainder reporting other for gender. Seventy-four percent of participants were Caucasian, 6% were African American, 14% were Asian, and 6% were Hispanic or Latino, with the remainder reporting other or mixed ethnicity.

Measures

Forgone identity dwelling. We measured forgone identity dwelling as a manipulation check for the forgone dwelling writing prompt. We used the same scale as described in Study 1 ($\alpha = .91$).

Longing. We measured longing with an adaptation of the scale used in Study 1. Participants were asked the degree to which they feel the following right now: "a longing," "a yearning," and "a wistfulness" ($\alpha = .90$).

STUDY 2A: RESULTS

Manipulation Checks

When given the forgone dwelling prompt, participants provided a number of reflections about how their lives would have gone had they chosen their "road not taken"—with some of those reflections being more positive than their status quo and others being more negative. For example, one participant who was currently a writer but could have been a counselor wrote:

> I probably would have many more interactions with people. These interactions would also probably happen on a much deeper and person level. I enjoy having heartfelt conversations with people, so that would be what I would find satisfaction in. However, I know that this type of interaction can be draining. So I would need to find opportunities for self care.

Another participant who was currently an engineering technician but could have been a chef wrote:

> Things would be a lot different. I would be working evenings instead of early mornings. It would be far less technically difficult, and would rely more on soft skills. It would be a creative outlet in day-to-day work. It would also be very stressful because of the time pressure preparing food. The pay would be lower. I might have a drug or alcohol problem because that is common in the professional cooking field.

When given the control prompt, participants simply recounted the details of their day, remaining focused on the "here and now" of their current lives. In some cases, they recounted the details of a typical workday; in others, they recounted the details of a day off. For example, one participant who was currently a media specialist but could have been a designer wrote:

> I woke up in the morning and did my morning routine—I shaved, showered, brushed my teeth. I ate breakfast—a waffle—drank two cups of coffee. I took my dog out and played a little ball. Then, I browsed

> the internet until it was time to leave for work. I checked news websites and social media. I came to work. My boss and I agreed that we needed a new piece of software so I spent the morning purchasing it and setting it up. I went to lunch before the process was complete. I had leftovers from last night's dinner.

Another participant who was currently a database administrator but could have been an accountant wrote:

> I got up and put food out for the cat. Overnight there had been a lot of sleet, so then I had to shovel off the porch. I came in and made coffee and drank it while I caught up on the internet. Then I sat down to find some work to pick at, it's slow on the weekend. I got up and did my core exercise video.

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) results revealed our writing prompt manipulation had the intended effect on forgone identity dwelling. Specifically, an ANOVA revealed a strong positive main effect of the forgone dwelling prompt versus the control prompt on forgone identity dwelling (F [1, 181] = 52.65, $p < .001$, $M = 4.23$ vs. 3.24, partial $\eta^2 = .23$). Participants who were asked to write about how life would have been had they taken their "road not taken" did indeed report more intense dwelling on their forgone identity.

Model Testing

ANOVA results revealed our writing prompt manipulation had the predicted effect on longing. Specifically, an ANOVA revealed a positive main effect of the forgone dwelling prompt versus the control prompt on longing (F [1, 181] = 6.18, $p < .05$, $M = 3.36$ vs. 2.96, partial $\eta^2 = .03$). Participants who were asked to write about how life would have been had they taken their "road not taken" did indeed report more intense feelings of longing, yearning, and wistfulness. We therefore replicated one of the core linkages in Figure 2.

STUDY 2B: METHODS

Sample and Procedure

Having replicated the linkage between forgone identity dwelling and longing, we turned to the linkage between longing and job crafting. We recruited 240 participants from Amazon's Mechanical Turk (Paolacci & Chandler, 2014), with the stipulation that they were full-time employees who worked at least 30 hours a week. All participants were offered $2.00 for what was advertised as a 20-minute time commitment. Unlike Study 2a, participants were not asked about either their current identity or their forgone identity in either the advertisement or the study materials. Rather, the study was framed as research on attitudes about work in general.

Longing was manipulated using a writing reflection exercise with participants randomly assigned to conditions. In the high longing condition, the manipulation read as follows:

> Longing is defined as feeling a need or desire for something without which life feels incomplete. A person who experiences longing may yearn for something, pine for something, or feel wistful about something. Please think of the thing(s) that you have a high degree of longing for in your working life (as opposed to your personal life). In other words, think about the thing(s) in the realm of work that you yearn for.
>
> Using at least 5 sentences, please write about this feeling below. Please write about what exactly it is that you are longing for at work.

In the low longing condition, the manipulation read as follows:

> Longing is defined as feeling a need or desire for something without which life feels incomplete. A person who experiences longing may yearn for something, pine for something, or feel wistful about something. Please think of the thing(s) that you have a low degree of longing for in your working life (as opposed to your personal life). In other words, think about the thing(s) in the realm of work that you don't really yearn for.
>
> Using at least 5 sentences, please write about this feeling below. Please write about why it was that you didn't really long for anything.

Thus, the high and low conditions differed in the degree to which participants were asked to write about things that they long for and yearn for at work.

Once the writing reflections were complete, we surveyed participants about longing, locus of control, and job crafting. We also included additional variables from Study 1. Those included trait negative affectivity, trait positive affectivity, proactive personality, and intrinsic motivation. Given our use of random assignment, however, none of these variables altered the tests of our model linkages. They are therefore excluded from our results.

We again used various screening methods to ensure the quality of our data. We excluded seven participants for missing attention checks (Meade & Craig, 2012), 30 participants for taking an unusual amount of time to complete the survey, and 29 participants who did not follow the writing prompt instructions. As a result of these data screening

procedures, we had a final usable sample size of 174 participants (73% of the 240 participants registered). Participants had an average age of 37.22 years ($SD = 4.44$) and an average tenure of 6.48 years in their current organizations ($SD = 4.81$). Fifty-two percent of participants were male, and 48% of participants were female. Seventy-six percent of participants were Caucasian, 8% were African American, 9% were Asian, and 6% were Hispanic or Latino, with the remainder reporting other or mixed ethnicity.

Measures

Longing. We measured longing as a manipulation check for the longing writing prompt. We used the same scale described in Study 2a ($\alpha = .96$).

Locus of control. Locus of control was assessed with six items from Brewin and Shapiro (1984). Items included, "I usually blame myself when thing go wrong," "when I have been criticized, it has usually been deserved," and "my misfortunes have resulted mainly from mistakes I've made" ($\alpha = .80$).

Job crafting. We measured job crafting with the same scale used in Study 1, adapted to reflect behavioral intentions. Items began, "During the next few weeks, in order to make it so that the job I do suits me, I will . . ." and included "work more intensively on tasks I enjoy," "concentrate more on work tasks that I like," and "undertake or look for additional tasks that match my interests" ($\alpha = .84$).

STUDY 2B: RESULTS

Manipulation Checks

When given the high longing prompt, participants recounted a number of things they yearned for in their working life. For the most part, those things transcended any particular occupation, as any profession can bring desires for more pay, a better boss, better coworkers, an improved work–life balance, and so forth. For example, one participant wrote:

> I have a longing for a significant pay raise and promotion. I feel that I've definitely proved myself, earned it, and continue to do so. I want to be able to provide better for my family, but also I want to feel as though I'm in a good place professionally. I wasted a lot of time in my younger years, so I keep having this feeling of needing to catch up. I feel that a promotion would definitely improve my morale.

Another participant wrote:

> For many years, I was longing for job security at my job. I never truly felt comfortable in my abilities and felt as though I was very disposable. I have come a long way since then, but I still have this unrequited desire to feel unreplaceable in what I do in my office. I regularly work hard to identify ways to make myself indispensable and make people need me around. This is what I long for in my professional life.

When given the low longing prompt, participants described aspects of their working lives that were acceptable. Again, those things tended to transcend any particular profession. For example, one participant wrote:

> I don't really long or yearn for a lot of attention in my working life. I let my accomplishments speak for themselves and don't bring them up on every occasion. Some other people relish and desire that recognition. I also don't have any longing to be ultra rich and make obscene amounts of money. I am comfortable making enough to make sure that I am comfortable.

Another participant wrote:

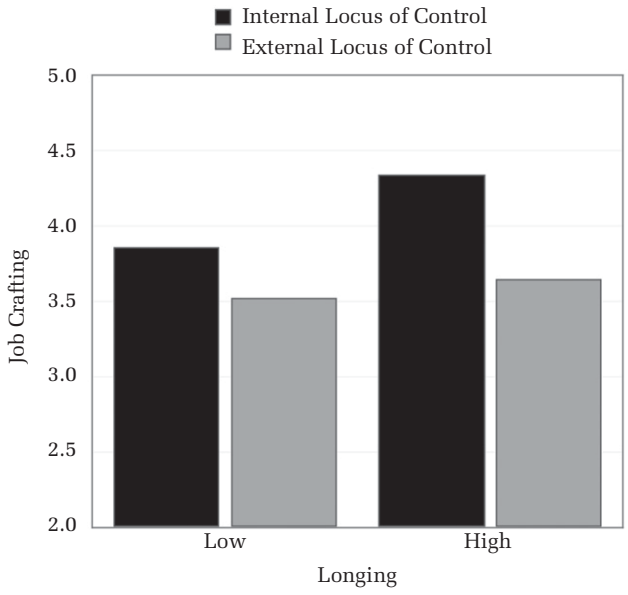
> One big thing I definitely don't long for at work is power or authority. I don't like bureaucracy or playing games. I just want to do the right and innovative thing. Not sit around while everyone swings around their power and stop good ideas from being executed because it wasn't their idea or they didn't put in their two cents.

ANOVA results revealed our writing prompt manipulation had the intended effect on longing. Specifically, an ANOVA revealed a strong positive main effect of the high longing prompt versus the low longing prompt on longing ($F[1, 172] = 289.84$, $p < .001$, $M = 4.13$ vs. 1.90, partial $\eta^2 = .63$). Participants who were asked to write about longing for something at work did indeed report more intense levels of longing, yearning, and wistfulness. In addition, an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) with locus of control as a covariate showed that locus of control did not significantly predict the longing manipulation check ($F[1, 170] = 2.57$, $p = .111$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$). Likewise, the effect of the longing prompt $\times$ locus of control interaction term on the manipulation check was not significant ($F[1, 170] = 1.52$, $p = .219$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$).

Model Testing

ANOVA results also revealed our writing prompt manipulation had the predicted effect on job crafting. Specifically, an ANOVA revealed a positive main effect of the high longing prompt versus the low longing prompt on job crafting ($F[1, 172] = 5.45$,

FIGURE 4
Longing × Locus of Control Interaction in Study 2b



$p < .05$, $M = 3.98$ vs. 3.68, partial $\eta^2 = .03$). Participants who were asked to write about longing for something at work did indeed report more intentions to job craft. We therefore replicated another of the core linkages in Figure 2. Our results also supported the moderating effect of locus of control on this relationship. Specifically, an ANCOVA with locus of control as a covariate also showed that the longing prompt × locus of control interaction term was statistically significant for job crafting (F [1, 170] = 3.96, $p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$). As shown in Figure 4, the relationship between longing and job crafting was more positive for employees with an internal locus ($\beta = .53$, $p < .05$) than for those with an external locus ($\beta = .05$, $p = .764$). We therefore replicated another of the core linkages in Figure 2.

DISCUSSION

The employees in our studies included social workers, truck drivers, architects, managers, technicians, realtors, nurses, artists, writers, engineers, and accountants. Models of identity construction would argue that those professional identities would get woven into employees' work identities alongside their unique characteristics and organizational memberships (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016; Miscenko & Day, 2016). The end goal of that construction process should be to have a work identity that is distinctive, highlighting what is unique about the employee, and coherent, reducing fragmentation while connecting different experiences (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016; Brown, 2015). Although identity construction models note that such processes may be messy or contested, they should eventually provide an answer to the question of "Who am I?"

Here is something that such models would not predict: that a profession an employee could have entered years earlier would continue to shape their reactions at work. On the one hand, it is true that the employees in our studies could have been veterinarians, plumbers, painters, therapists, drafters, brokers, doctors, police officers, machinists, and teachers. On the other hand, such "roads not taken" should have been left behind by the identity construction process. The existence of such "identity echoes" should have been justified via sensemaking, left behind by additional identity experimentation, or folded into larger narrative arcs (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016). To the degree that this occurs, forgone professional identities would be something that employees would rarely ponder.

Instead, many of the employees in our sample dwelled on their forgone professional identities. They thought about their potential alternative selves, they reflected on how their lives would have been different, and they contemplated their decisions to forgo their "road not taken." Such "identity echoes" should not have been salient, especially since the proverbial forks in the road were often several years in the past. It may be, however, that the "road not taken" is becoming an increasingly salient concept in contemporary society. Facebook groups can provide a visual and textual peek into life in other professions. Glassdoor searches can illustrate what it is like to work in companies in those professions. Even attempts to disconnect and unwind can bring forgone identities to the fore. With the proliferation of television content, it is likely that many of the professions in Tables 1 and 4 are featured on scripted or reality-based shows.

Our results also revealed that forgone identity dwelling had important implications for employee reactions in their current work role. Dwelling represents thinking about something in a repetitive or circular fashion (Lyubomirsky et al., 2011; Mathieson et al., 2014), and the broader literature on repetitive thought has pointed to significant affective consequences for such cognitions (Watkins, 2008).

Dwelling likely results in a proverbial list of plusses and minuses about the forgone path. Even if that proverbial list is tilted in favor of the current path, the plusses of the forgone path will have surfaced, been contemplated, and re-contemplated. We theorized that such contemplation would result in longing—an affective state of yearning and wistfulness (Holm, 1999, 2001). One can envision the employees in Tables 1 and 4 feeling a wistfulness as they dwell on the professional identities they could have had.

The unique nature of longing resulted in some interesting behavioral implications. Because longing is both negative and positive as a feeling state, the behavioral effects it gives rise to represent something of a mixed bag. Specifically, our field study indicated that longing both increased withdrawal behavior and decreased helping behavior. On the other hand, longing did predict job crafting, as Obodaru (2012, 2017) theorized—and as would be expected from work on unanswered occupational callings (Berg et al., 2010). It may be that employees used job crafting as a conscious or subconscious form of "identity play." Such crafting responses were more likely for employees with an internal locus of control—those who view themselves as shaping their lives rather than their lives being shaped by chance or powerful others (Brewin & Shapiro, 1984; Levenson, 1974; Rotter, 1966).

Theoretical Contributions

We believe our work makes a number of contributions to the identity construction literature. Our field and experimental results show that "identity echoes" from the past can influence employee reactions after a current work identity has been created. Such results go against the forward progress inherent in models of identity construction (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016). The continuing salience of a forgone professional identity represents a lack of coherence within the current work identity—a fragmentation and disconnection that models of identity construction explicitly seek to avoid (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016; Brown, 2015; Caza et al., 2018).

Importantly, our results extend Obodaru's (2012, 2017) theorizing on forgone professional identities in important ways. Our introduction of identity dwelling provides one mechanism for understanding such identities. Simply having a forgone professional identity may not lead to important consequences—the identity must be thought about, reflected upon, and contemplated. Identity dwelling captures that critical process and represents a construct that could be used with other identity constructs, as described below. In addition, our inclusion of potentially negative consequences for forgone identity dwelling—in the form of increased withdrawal behavior and decreased helping behavior—also balances out the more positive bent in Obodaru's (2017) theorizing. In the end, having a salient forgone professional identity can manifest in both positive and negative ways, and it is important to explore both sides of that equation comprehensively.

Our focus on longing as the most proximal consequence of forgone identity dwelling complements the cognitive bent of the identity construction literature. As noted earlier, reviews of that literature have made the case that identity construction has paid too little attention to emotions (Brown, 2015; Caza et al., 2018; Winkler, 2018). Identity work is explicitly defined as cognitive, with process models focusing on cognitive constructs while omitting affective ones (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016; Caza et al., 2018). Showing that the behavioral consequences of forgone identity dwelling travel through longing illustrates some of the promise that an affective focus could bring to the literature. Indeed, as an emotion that blends sadness and happiness while supplying some motivational energy (Kemper, 1987; Holm, 2001; Reisenzein, 1994), longing may be especially suited to capturing the affective dynamics of identity construction. Weaving longing into models of identity construction would address Holm's (1999) contention that longing has remained in the background of the emotions literature, even when compared to other secondary emotions (Fehr & Russell, 1984; Kemper, 1987; Reisenzein, 1994; Shaver et al., 1987).

Suggestions for Future Research

Our findings open several avenues for future research. Although we applied our concept of identity dwelling to forgone professional identities, employees likely dwell on a number of other selves. Those could include past selves, ideal selves, and ought selves—with the latter two reflecting who employees would like to be or who they feel they should be (Higgins, 1987). Such selves are a source of comparison for the current self, so dwelling on those comparisons is likely to have several implications for identity construction. As Ashforth and Schinoff (2016) have suggested, identity construction often occurs according to some standards that push employees toward some identity elements and away from others. Those other selves could

comprise those standards, with dwelling amplifying the salience of those standards.

Although our focus was on the affective consequences of identity dwelling, the construct should also have cognitive consequences. Some guidance for research directions can be taken from work on repetitive thought and from models of identity construction. For example, Watkins's (2008) review illustrated that repetitive thought sometimes has positive cognitive consequences, including increased monitoring, information seeking, generation of behavioral plans, problem solving, and openness to other possibilities. Such reactions could facilitate many of the cognitive aspects of identity construction. For example, monitoring and information seeking could facilitate the sensemaking activities that occur in identity construction (Ashforth and Schinoff, 2016). As another example, behavioral plans, problem solving, and openness could help employees navigate the challenges involved when organizations seek to manage or influence work identities (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002).

Researchers should also consider the potential for reciprocal causality between longing and job crafting. Our experimental results replicated the effect of longing on job crafting, but it may be that crafting activities trigger additional longing in the future. Getting a small taste of some element that would have been found in a forgone path might wind up making an employee yearn even more for other aspects of that path. In Lazarus's (1991) terms, the additional exposure to what a forgone path could feel like might make an employee more aware of their "place in the world," increasing the salience of the gap between "what is" and "what could have been." Interestingly, although research has demonstrated the positive effects of job crafting on employee attitudes (e.g., Demerouti, Bakker, & Gevers, 2015; Vogel et al., 2016), research on its affective consequences is limited. Some employees may experience a virtuous cycle where crafting triggers longing which goes on to trigger still more crafting. For other employees, however, such a cycle could result in disenchantment with crafting and an eventual exit from their field.

Strengths and Limitations

The studies described here have some important strengths. Our sample for the field study was occupationally diverse, covering a broad array of current and forgone professional identities. That diversity allowed us to have adequate variance in forgone identity dwelling. We also used three weeks of separation between surveys, as well as multiple sources, to reduce common method bias in most of our linkages (Doty & Glick, 1998; Podsakoff et al., 2003). In our experimental studies, we again utilized samples with adequate occupational diversity. We also made use of random assignment, allowing us to control for all known and unknown third variables that could have impacted our findings (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000).

Our studies do have some limitations, however. It is possible that the employees in our sample faced multiple forks in the road, resulting in more than one forgone identity. As in Obodaru (2017), however, we asked participants to describe their most salient forgone identity. To the extent that people have multiple forgone identities, our findings may be missing an important nuance. In addition, our measures of forgone identity dwelling and longing were created for this study. Although we took steps to examine their content validity (Colquitt et al., 2019; Hinkin & Tracey, 1999), continued use of both scales is needed to provide further evidence of more general construct validity.

It may also be that there is some reciprocal causation in the dwelling–longing relationship. Reviews of the emotions literature have made it clear that cognition and emotion are highly integrated and commingled (Elfenbein, 2007; Izard, 2009; Lazarus, 1991). Our theoretical lens did provide sound logic for a dwelling→longing prediction (Lazarus, 1991), and the broader literature on repetitive thought has typically viewed it as an antecedent of affect (Watkins, 2008). Moreover, the use of a manipulation for dwelling with random assignment to conditions in Study 2a lends some credence to our causal direction. All that said, future research should examine the possibility that dwelling and longing have iterative effects, with longing encouraging subsequent dwelling. In addition to experimental methods, such work would benefit from cross-lagged analyses with panel data (e.g., Farrell, 1994).

Finally, although we controlled for both current and forgone identity life satisfaction, other features of a current or forgone identity may influence the extent to which people engage in dwelling. For example, people may differ in how strongly they identify with their current professional identities (e.g., Ashforth, Joshi, Anand, & O'Leary-Kelly, 2013), and a chef who identifies strongly with their current profession may have come to peace with their forgone identity of accountant. They may spend less time thinking about "what could have been" and experience less dwelling on the

accountant path as a result. People may also view certain professions as more prestigious or practical than others (e.g., Walker & Tracey, 2012). A person who feels that their forgone identity is lower in status than their current identity may be less likely to dwell on that forgone identity. Similarly, although a person may have enjoyed a career as a singer, they may view that path as less practical for raising a family than their current profession of attorney.

Practical Implications

Our findings indicate the importance of forgone identities and the influence they may have in the workplace. Our results suggest that people not only have forgone identities but they also continue to think about and dwell on "what could have been." Given the increasing array of occupational choices, the enhanced information about other paths, and the higher rates of organizational change, employees may have more forgone identities than ever before. We therefore suggest that managers take the time to understand their employees' "roads not taken." There are a variety of forums for such conversations, including mentoring discussions, coaching sessions, or developmental workshops. Such insights could provide managers with useful knowledge that can deepen their understanding of their employees, their backgrounds, and their aspirations.

Managers could then use such information to inform the work context they create. As scholars have noted, employees' abilities to craft their jobs may be limited by the work environment (Berg et al., 2013; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Rigid environments may hinder job crafting and more flexible and autonomous environments may foster it. By providing flexibility and autonomy, managers may influence the extent to which employees are able to craft their jobs. Managers could also pay closer attention to tasks or roles that seem to align with employees' forgone identities—intentionally delegating those tasks or identifying potential role expansions. In this way, managers could take steps toward preventing the detrimental behaviors that forgone identity dwelling might otherwise produce.

Our findings for locus of control also provide some practical implications. Specifically, the literature on locus of control change techniques has suggested that employees can be trained to bring a more internal mindset to their work (Gardner & Beatty, 1980). Studies have indicated that certain training programs can influence internal cognitions, attitudes, and beliefs and may increase both general and more domain-specific locus scores (e.g., Cone & Owens, 1991; Diamond & Shapiro, 1973; Hall, Hall, & Abaci, 1997; Huang & Ford, 2012). Using the jargon from Judge, Simon, Hurst, and Kelley's (2014) within-person study of the Big Five, such interventions are impacting "state personality"—the deviation around a person's central tendency on a given trait. In the case of an external locus person, the interventions are maximizing the frequency with which the person manifests the most internal versions of their cognitions, attitudes, and beliefs. Indeed, cultivating that sort of "internal mindset" is a core component of stress management approaches used in academic and business settings (e.g., Britt & Jex, 2015; Marcic, Seltzer, & Vaill, 2001). By utilizing such interventions, managers may be able to encourage more positive behavioral reactions to forgone identities.

CONCLUSION

The social worker from our opening quote may often picture what life would have been like as a veterinarian. Maybe she would have had more enjoyable daily interactions, contributed to the well-being of others, and felt as if she was living out her passion. Such thoughts could make her feel a certain yearning or wistfulness. Our results suggest that colleagues should not dismiss such feelings as stray musings that amount to nothing but rather consider the potential consequences. Colleagues should encourage the social worker to craft her job as best she can. Maybe she can facilitate work events that promote quality coworker relationships, making her daily interactions more pleasant. Maybe she can focus on the activities that she enjoys most—activities that contribute to the well-being of children or those in need. Perhaps those reactions would help her feel like she is living out her passion while living her current identity of social worker. As this example suggests, longing for the "road not taken" need not lead to solely detrimental outcomes. Rather, it depends on the path employees take when reacting to their forgone identities.

REFERENCES

Alvesson, M., & Willmott, H. 2002. Identity regulation as organizational control: Producing the appropriate individual. ***Journal of Management Studies***, 39: 619–644.

Ambady, N., & Gray, H. M. 2002. On being sad and mistaken: Mood effects on the accuracy of thin-slide

judgments. ***Journal of Personality and Social Psychology***, 83: 947–961.

Ashforth, B. E., Harrison, S. H., & Corley, K. G. 2008. Identification in organizations: An examination of four fundamental questions. ***Journal of Management***, 34: 325–374.

Ashforth, B. E., Joshi, M., Anand, V., & O'Leary-Kelly, A. M. 2013. Extending the expanded model of organizational identification to occupations. ***Journal of Applied Social Psychology***, 43: 2426–2448.

Ashforth, B. E., & Schinoff, B. S. 2016. Identity under construction: How individuals come to define themselves in organizations. ***Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior***, 3: 111–137.

Bachrach, D. G., Powell, B. C., Collins, B. J., & Richey, R. G. 2006. Effects of task interdependence on the relationship between helping behavior and group performance. ***Journal of Applied Psychology***, 91: 1396–1405.

Bateman, T. S., & Crant, J. M. 1993. The proactive component of organizational behavior: A measure and correlates. ***Journal of Organizational Behavior***, 14: 103–118.

Berg, J. M., Dutton, J. E., & Wrzesniewski, A. 2013. Job crafting and meaningful work. In B. J. Dik, Z. S. Byrne, & M. F. Steger (Eds.), ***Purpose and meaning in the workplace***: 81–104. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Berg, J. M., Grant, A. M., & Johnson, V. 2010. When callings are calling: Crafting work and leisure in pursuit of unanswered occupational callings. ***Organization Science***, 21: 973–994.

Bodenhausen, G. V., Kramer, G. P., & Süsser, K. 1994. Happiness and stereotypic thinking in social judgment. ***Journal of Personality and Social Psychology***, 66: 621–632.

Brewin, C. R., & Shapiro, D. A. 1984. Beyond locus of control: Attribution of responsibility for positive and negative outcomes. ***British Journal of Psychology***, 75: 43–49.

Britt, T. W., & Jex, S. M. 2015. ***Thriving under stress: Harnessing demands in the workplace***. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Brown, A. D. 2015. Identities and identity work in organizations. ***International Journal of Management Reviews***, 17: 20–40.

Caza, B. B., Vough, H., & Puranik, H. 2018. Identity work in organizations and occupations: Definitions, theories, and pathways forward. ***Journal of Organizational Behavior***, 39: 889–910.

Cohen, J., Cohen, P., West, S. G., & Aiken, L. S. 2003. ***Applied multiple regression/correlation analysis for the behavioral sciences***. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Colquitt, J. A., Sabey, T. B., Rodell, J. B., & Hill, E. T. 2019. Content validation guidelines: Evaluation criteria for definitional correspondence and definitional distinctiveness. ***Journal of Applied Psychology***, 104: 1243–1265.

Cone, A. L., & Owens, S. K. 1991. Academic and locus of control enhancement in a freshman study skills and college adjustment course. ***Psychological Reports***, 68: 1211–1217.

Cortina, J. M., Chen, G., & Dunlap, W. P. 2001. Testing interaction effects in LISREL: Examination and illustration of available procedures. ***Organizational Research Methods***, 4: 324–360.

Demerouti, E., Bakker, A. B., & Gevers, J. M. P. 2015. Job crafting and extra-role behavior: The role of work engagement and flourishing. ***Journal of Vocational Behavior***, 91: 87–96.

Diamond, M. J., & Shapiro, J. L. 1973. Changes in locus of control as a function of encounter group experiences: A study and replication. ***Journal of Abnormal Psychology***, 82: 514–518.

Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. 1985. The satisfaction with life scale. ***Journal of Personality Assessment***, 49: 71–75.

Doty, D. H., & Glick, W. H. 1998. Common methods bias: Does common methods variance really bias results? ***Organizational Research Methods***, 1: 374–406.

Elfenbein, H. A. 2007. Emotion in organizations: A review and theoretical integration. ***Academy of Management Annals***, 1: 315–386.

Farrell, A. D. 1994. Structural equation modeling with longitudinal data: Strategies for examining group differences and reciprocal relationships. ***Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology***, 62: 477–487.

Fehr, B., & Russell, J. A. 1984. Concept of emotion viewed from a prototype perspective. ***Journal of Experimental Psychology***, 113: 464–486.

Fox, S., & Spector, P. E. 1999. A model of work frustration–aggression. ***Journal of Organizational Behavior***, 20: 915–931.

Fredrickson, B. L., Tugade, M. M., Waugh, C. E., & Larkin, G. R. 2003. What good are positive emotions in crises? A prospective study of resilience and emotions following the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11th, 2001. ***Journal of Personality and Social Psychology***, 84: 365–376.

Frijda, N. H. 1987. Emotion, cognitive structure, and action tendency. ***Cognition and Emotion***, 1: 115–143.

Gardner, D. C., & Beatty, G. J. 1980. Locus of control change techniques: Important variables in work training. ***Education***, 100: 237–242.

George, J. M., & Brief, A. P. 1992. Feeling good–doing good: A conceptual analysis of the mood at

work–organizational spontaneity relationship. ***Psychological Bulletin***, 112: 310–329.

Guay, F., Vallerand, R. J., & Blanchard, C. 2000. On the assessment of situational intrinsic and extrinsic motivation: The Situational Motivation Scale (SIMS). ***Motivation and Emotion***, 24: 175–213.

Hall, E., Hall, C., & Abaci, R. 1997. The effects of human relations training on reported teacher stress, pupil control ideology and locus of control. ***British Journal of Educational Psychology***, 67: 483–496.

Hanisch, K. A., & Hulin, C. L. 1990. Job attitudes and organizational withdrawal: An examination of retirement and other voluntary withdrawal behaviors. ***Journal of Vocational Behavior***, 37: 60–78.

Higgins, E. T. 1987. Self-discrepancy: A theory relating self and affect. ***Psychological Review***, 94: 319–340.

Hinkin, T. R., & Tracey, J. B. 1999. An analysis of variance approach to content validation. ***Organizational Research Methods***, 2: 175–186.

Holm, O. 1999. Analyses of longing: Origins, levels, and dimensions. ***Journal of Psychology***, 133: 621–630.

Holm, O. 2001. Dimensions and aspects of longing: Age and gender differences in Swedish 9-, 12-, and 15-year-old children. ***Journal of Psychology***, 135: 381–397.

Huang, J. L., & Ford, J. K. 2012. Driving locus of control and driving behaviors: Inducing change through driver training. ***Transportation Research Part F: Traffic Psychology and Behaviour***, 15: 358–368.

Ibarra, H., & Petriglieri, J. L. 2010. Identity work and play. ***Journal of Organizational Change Management***, 23: 10–25.

Izard, C. E. 2009. Emotion theory and research: Highlights, unanswered questions, and emerging issues. ***Annual Review of Psychology***, 60: 1–25.

Judge, T. A., Locke, E. A., Durham, C. C., & Kluger, A. N. 1998. Dispositional effects on job and life satisfaction: The role of core evaluations. ***Journal of Applied Psychology***, 83: 17–34.

Judge, T. A., Simon, L. S., Hurst, C., & Kelley, K. 2014. What I experienced yesterday is who I am today: Relationship of work motivations and behaviors to within-individual variation in the five-factor model of personality. ***Journal of Applied Psychology***, 99: 199–221.

Judge, T. A., & Watanabe, S. 1993. Another look at the job satisfaction–life satisfaction relationship. ***Journal of Applied Psychology***, 78: 939–948.

Kaplan, S., Bradley, J. C., Luchman, J. S., & Haynes, D. 2009. On the role of positive and negative affectivity in job performance: A meta-analytic investigation. ***Journal of Applied Psychology***, 94: 162–176.

Kemper, T. D. 1987. How many emotions are there? Wedding the social and the autonomic components. ***American Journal of Sociology***, 93: 263–289.

Kerlinger, F. N., & Lee, H. B. 2000. ***Foundations of behavioral research***. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt.

Kline, R. B. 2005. ***Principles and practices of structural equation modeling***. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Larsen, R. J., & Ketelaar, T. 1991. Personality and susceptibility to positive and negative emotional states. ***Journal of Personality and Social Psychology***, 61: 132–140.

Lazarus, R. S. 1991. ***Emotion & adaptation***. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

LePine, J. A., & Van Dyne, L. 2001. Voice and cooperative behavior as contrasting forms of contextual performance: Evidence of differential relationships with big five personality characteristics and cognitive ability. ***Journal of Applied Psychology***, 86: 326–336.

Levenson, H. 1974. Activism and powerful others: Distinctions within the concept of internal–external control. ***Journal of Personality Assessment***, 38: 377–383.

Lyubomirsky, S., Boehm, J. K., Kasri, F., & Zehm, K. 2011. The cognitive and hedonic costs of dwelling on achievement-related negative experiences: Implications for enduring happiness and unhappiness. ***Emotion***, 11: 1152–1167.

MacKinnon, D. P., Lockwood, C. M., Hoffman, J. M., West, S. G., & Sheets, V. 2002. A comparison of methods to test mediation and other intervening variable effects. ***Psychological Methods***, 7: 83–104.

Marcic, D., Seltzer, J., & Vaill, P. 2001. ***Organizational behavior: Experiences and cases***. Cincinnati, OH: South-Western College Publishing.

Mathieson, L. C., Klimes-Dougan, B., & Crick, N. R. 2014. Dwelling on it may make it worse: The links between relational victimization, relational aggression, rumination, and depressive symptoms in adolescents. ***Development and Psychopathology***, 26: 735–747.

Meade, A. W., & Craig, S. B. 2012. Identifying careless responses in survey data. ***Psychological Methods***, 17: 437–455.

Miscenko, D., & Day, D. V. 2016. Identity and identification at work. ***Organizational Psychology Review***, 6: 215–247.

Muthén, L. K., & Muthén, B. O. 2017. ***Mplus user's guide*** (8th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Muthén & Muthén.

Ng, T. W. H., Sorensen, K. L., & Eby, L. T. 2006. Locus of control at work: A meta-analysis. ***Journal of Organizational Behavior***, 27: 1057–1087.

Ng, T. W. H., Sorensen, K. L., Eby, L. T., & Feldman, D. C. 2007. Determinants of job mobility: A theoretical integration and extension. ***Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology***, 80: 363–386.

Niessen, C., Weseler, D., & Kostova, P. 2016. When and why do individuals craft their jobs? The role of individual motivation and work characteristics for job crafting. ***Human Relations***, 69: 1287–1313.

Obodaru, O. 2012. The self not taken: How alternative selves develop and how they influence our professional lives. ***Academy of Management Review***, 37: 34–57.

Obodaru, O. 2017. Forgone, but not forgotten: Toward a theory of forgone professional identities. ***Academy of Management Journal***, 60: 523–553.

Organ, D. W., & Ryan, K. 1995. A meta-analytic review of attitudinal and dispositional predictors of organizational citizenship behavior. ***Personnel Psychology***, 48: 775–802.

Paolacci, G., & Chandler, J. 2014. Inside the Turk: Understanding Mechanical Turk as a participant pool. ***Current Directions in Psychological Science***, 23: 184–188.

Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J., & Podsakoff, N. P. 2003. Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. ***Journal of Applied Psychology***, 88: 879–903.

Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Moorman, R. H., & Fetter, R. 1990. Transformational leader behaviors and their effects on followers' trust in leader, satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behaviors. ***Leadership Quarterly***, 1: 107–142.

Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Paine, J. B., & Bachrach, D. G. 2000. Organizational citizenship behaviors: A critical review of the theoretical and empirical literature and suggestions for future research. ***Journal of Management***, 26: 513–563.

Pratt, M. G. 2012. Rethinking identity construction processes in organizations: Three questions to consider. In M. Schultz, S. Maguire, A. Langley, & H. Tsoukas (Eds.), ***Constructing identity in and around organizations***: 21–49. Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press.

Raghunathan, R., & Pham, M. T. 1999. All negative moods are not equal: Motivational influences of anxiety and sadness on decision making. ***Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes***, 79: 56–77.

Reisenzein, R. 1994. Pleasure-arousal theory and the intensity of emotions. ***Journal of Personality and Social Psychology***, 67: 525–539.

Robinson, S. L., & Bennett, R. J. 1997. Workplace deviance: Its definitions, its manifestations, and its causes. In R. Lewicki, B. Sheppard, & R. Bies (Eds.), ***Research on negotiation in organizations***, vol. 6: 3–27. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Roseman, I. J., Wiest, C., & Swartz, T. S. 1994. Phenomenology, behaviors, and goals differentiate discrete emotions. ***Journal of Personality and Social Psychology***, 67: 206–221.

Rotter, J. B. 1966. Generalized expectancies for internal versus external control of reinforcement. Psychological Monographs, 80: 1–28.

Rudolph, C. W., Katz, I. M., Lavigne, K. N., & Zacher, H. 2017. Job crafting: A meta-analysis of relationships with individual differences, job characteristics, and work outcomes. ***Journal of Vocational Behavior***, 102: 112–138.

Shaver, P., Schwartz, J., Kirson, D., & O'Connor, C. 1987. Emotion knowledge: Further exploration of a prototype approach. ***Journal of Personality and Social Psychology***, 52: 1061–1086.

Sherman, D. K., Hartson, K. A., Binning, K. R., Purdie-Vaughns, V., Garcia, J., Taborsky-Barba, S., Tomassetti, S., Nussbaum, A. D., & Cohen, G. L. 2013. Deflecting the trajectory and changing the narrative: How self-affirmation affects academic performance and motivation under identity threat. ***Journal of Personality and Social Psychology***, 104: 591–618.

Spencer, S. J., Zanna, M. P., & Fong, G. T. 2005. Establishing a causal chain: Why experiments are often more effective than meditational analyses in examining psychological processes. ***Journal of Personality and Social Psychology***, 89: 845–851.

Storbeck, J., & Clore, G. L. 2005. With sadness comes accuracy; with happiness, false memory: Mood and the false memory effect. ***Psychological Science***, 16: 785–791.

Tolbert, P. S. 1996. Occupations, organizations, and boundaryless careers. In M. B. Arthur & D. M. Rouseau (Eds.), ***The boundaryless career: A new employment principle for a new organizational era***: 331–349. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Valkenburg, P. M., & Van der Voort, T. H. A. 1994. Influence of TV on daydreaming and creative imagination: A review of research. ***Psychological Bulletin***, 116: 316–339.

Van Dijk, W. W., & Van der Pligt, J. 1997. The impact of probability and magnitude of outcome on disappointment and elation. ***Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes***, 69: 277–284.

Van Dyne, L., & LePine, J. A. 1998. Helping and voice extra-role behaviors: Evidence of construct and predictive validity. ***Academy of Management Journal***, 41: 108–119.

Vogel, R. M., Rodell, J. B., & Lynch, J. W. 2016. Engaged and productive misfits: How job crafting and leisure activity mitigate the negative effects of value incongruence. ***Academy of Management Journal***, 59: 1561–1584.

Walker, T. L., & Tracey, T. J. G. 2012. Perceptions of occupational prestige: Differences between African American and White college students. ***Journal of Vocational Behavior***, 80: 76–81.

Watkins, E. R. 2008. Constructive and unconstructive repetitive thought. ***Psychological Bulletin***, 134: 163–206.

Watson, D., & Clark, L. A. 1994. ***The PANAS-X: Manual for the positive and negative affect schedule –***

expanded form. doi: 10.1007/978-94-007-0753-5_2212.

Winkler, I. 2018. Identity work and emotions: A review. ***International Journal of Management Reviews***, 20: 120–133.

Wrzesniewski, A., & Dutton, J. E. 2001. Crafting a job: Revisioning employees as active crafters of their work. ***Academy of Management Review***, 26: 179–201.

Wrzesniewski, A., LoBuglio, N., Dutton, J. E., & Berg, J. M. 2013. Job crafting and cultivating positive meaning and identity in work. In A. B. Bakker (Ed.), ***Advances in positive organizational psychology***, vol. 1: 281–302. London, U.K.: Emerald.

Rachel Burgess (rachel.burgess@asu.edu) is an assistant professor in the Department of Management and Entrepreneurship at Arizona State University's W. P. Carey School of Business. She received her BBA in entrepreneurial management from Texas Christian University. Her research interests include identity, justice, and work–nonwork.

Jason A. Colquitt (jason.colquitt@nd.edu) is the Franklin D. Schurz Professor in the Management & Organization department of the University of Notre Dame's Mendoza College of Business. He received his PhD from Michigan State University's Eli Broad Graduate School of Management. His research interests include justice, trust, and personality.

Erin C. Long (erin.long@uga.edu) is an assistant professor in the Department of Management at the University of Georgia's Terry College of Business. She received her PhD from the University of North Carolina's Kenan-Flagler Business School. Her research interests include mindfulness, affect, and human energy.