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Thinking of you thinking of me: An integrative review of meta-perception in the workplace

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Summary

Decades of research demonstrate a fundamental human tendency to care about how one is seen by others, and for good reason; the perceptions and appraisals of others affect a wealth of important outcomes in our lives. In the workplace, for example, these outcomes include dismissals, bonuses, and promotions. In this review, we integrate a diverse body of research surrounding human "beliefs about how we are seen by others" and define these beliefs as meta-perceptions. We derive an overarching framework to highlight what we do and do not know about meta-perceptions in the workplace by disentangling their content, structural composition, and effects. Our review highlights that meta-perceptions can have important implications for employees' affect, cognition, and behavior, yet there is a lack of research exploring meta-perceptions in work settings and an inconsistency in how they are conceptualized and explored. Finally, we suggest several pathways for future research into the role of meta-perception in the workplace.

KEYWORDS
interpersonal perception, meta-perception, perceived regard, reflected appraisal, social perception

1 | INTRODUCTION

Generally, people tend to care about how others see them (e.g., Kenny, 1994; Sheldon & Johnson, 1993). How we are seen by others affects our livelihood; salaries, promotions, and dismissals are tied to how our competence, performance, and skills are evaluated by those around us. This makes knowing—and managing—the perceptions of others important for optimizing workplace outcomes. In her "Top-5 Tips for a Successful Career," former PepsiCo CEO Indra Nooyi emphasizes the importance of considering what one wants to be "known for" as a leader (Umoh, 2018). To determine—and influence—what one is "known for" requires monitoring the reactions (King et al., 2008; Sheldon & Johnson, 1993) and appraisals (e.g., 360° feedback; Zenger et al., 2011) of colleagues, supervisors, and

subordinates. For example, after important pitches, interviews, or meetings, one might ask a co-worker, "How did I come across? Do you think they liked me?" Such feedback (a compliment, critical note, or non-verbal reaction) may help people understand how they are perceived. By attempting to "read the minds" of others, people form what are called "meta-perceptions." Meta-perceptions are defined as individuals' beliefs about how they are perceived by others (Kenny, 1994).

Extensive research shows that individuals' meta-perceptions can have implications for their affect, cognition, behavior, and relationships (e.g., Butz & Plant, 2006; Gordijn et al., 2008). For example, people examine how others interact with them (King et al., 2008; Sheldon & Johnson, 1993) and attempt to bring their qualities to the attention of others (impression management; cf. Bolino et al., 2016;

Crawford et al., 2019). Research also shows that people whose performance is publicly positively evaluated are more persistent in obtaining their goals (Williams & DeSteno, 2008) and that social approval can stimulate voluntary help and cooperation within teams (Rand et al., 2009).

Noting this, previous reviews do not specifically focus on meta-perception in the workplace or only focus on specific subcategories (e.g., age-based meta-stereotypes of workers; Finkelstein et al., 2020). The most important reviews are in the social psychology domain and highlight the role of accuracy in meta-perception (whether and when people are "right" about how others perceive them; i.e., meta-accuracy or meta-insight; Carlson & Kenny, 2012). It is important to note that although people can dedicate much time to observing others' behavior and reactions toward them, their conclusions about how others see them are often inaccurate (Brion et al., 2015; Byron & Landis, 2020; Kenny, 1994). Moreover, individuals can be accurate in certain areas (e.g., liking) and simultaneously inaccurate in other areas (e.g., who competes with them; Eisenkraft et al., 2017). Regardless of their accuracy, meta-perceptions can still influence employee behavior, motivation, and performance (e.g., Grutterink et al., 2013; Hu et al., 2014), and it is, therefore, important to clarify what we do and do not know about their content, structural composition, and effects in the workplace.

Considering their potential significance for work processes and outcomes, research regarding meta-perceptions in the broader psychological literature needs to be integrated with that in the management literature (henceforth referred to as work-related literature; see Byron & Landis, 2020; King et al., 2008, for a similar observation). Further, studies in the work-related literature use a broad range of terminology to explore meta-perception (e.g., reflected self, reflected appraisal, perceived regard, looking glass, or identity discrepancy), making it difficult to understand common trends and implications across these studies. Thus, our main objective is to create a common language and consolidate this literature into an overarching framework to explore meta-perception and its effects in the workplace, as well as to guide future research in organizational behavior on this important topic.

We proceed as follows. First, we review the literature to conceptualize meta-perception that distinguishes four components: the content (the attribute on which the meta-perception is based), the target (the "other" that the meta-perception is about, which could be a specific individual, group, or abstract general other), the perceiver (the person forming the meta-perception), and the relationship (the implied interrelationship between target and perceiver). Second, we review the literature considering this integrative framework to summarize what we know (and still do not know) about meta-perception. Finally, we highlight problems with our current understanding, discuss what we can contribute to the work-related literature, and suggest pathways for future research. We focus specifically on application to the literature on leadership and followership, identity and diversity, and team dynamics, which our review revealed as prominent clusters of literature related to meta-perceptions in the workplace.

2 | METHODOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS

2.1 | Working definition and identifying articles for inclusion

For our systematic literature review, we adopted an approach similar to that of Caza et al. (2018). The first step was a keyword search of "meta-perception(s)" and "meta perception(s)" in the current databases for work-related and other psychological literature (Web of Science, PsychInfo, and Google Scholar). This resulted in a total of 192 peer reviewed articles, two handbooks, and four authored books. On reading these, we discovered that Kenny's (1994) work was the most referred to for the definition of meta-perception.[1] Other prominent works included seminal articles, of which the most cited were Carlson, Vazire, and Oltmanns (2011) and Vazire and Carlson (2011), book chapters (e.g., King et al., 2008), and reviews (e.g., Carlson & Kenny, 2012), which together helped to define the central term "meta-perception" and informed the next step of the review. Dissecting these articles according to Web of Science categories showed that the bulk belonged to social psychology (46.4%), followed by multidisciplinary, applied, or general psychology (17.7%) and clinical/developmental psychology or psychiatry (10.9%). Only 9.4% of the articles were published in the business and management literature.

Second, we expanded our initial source list. We reviewed the references in our core initial sources and conducted a reverse citation search for studies that cited them up until the present day. Based on the results, we broadened our search terms and scope of the review to explicitly include works that did not use the term meta-perception but used constructs adhering to that definition. Comparing definitions of our core sources showed consensus about the conceptualization of meta-perception, with only slightly different wording—for example, definitions ranged from (with italics added), "*judgment* of how others *view* us" (Kenny, 1994, p. 146), to "people's *beliefs* about how others *see* them" (Carlson, Vazire, & Furr, 2011), to "*beliefs* of how they are *perceived* by others" (King et al., 2008). We, therefore, adhered to this broad definition of meta-perception and used it as an inclusion criterion.

This reverse citation search resulted in papers that used the term meta-perception as well as related terms used for a variety of phenomena, including how people generally believe others see them (e.g., reflected self, reflected appraisal, perceived regard, looking glass, or identity discrepancy; cf., Ashford et al., 2003; Cooley, 1922; Jackson et al., 2014), how minority groups experience stereotypes they think others might have about them (e.g., stereotype threat; Gordijn et al., 2008; Picho et al., 2013), thinking that one is (un)valued or (un) affirmed by others (e.g., Grutterink et al., 2013), perceptions of identity (in)congruences (e.g., Meister et al., 2017), and whether the beliefs people have about how others see them are correct (i.e., meta-accuracy or meta-insight; e.g., Elfenbein et al., 2009). When we encountered new terms, we compared them to the dominant definitions we had distilled from the seminal sources identified above. When definitions captured what could be considered a meta-perception, we included the study in our review.

With an extensive literature review of meta-perceptions in hand, we coded and divided our literature into studies related and not specifically related to the workplace. In the non-work-related psychological literature, we found empirical research on meta-perceptions stemming from five key clusters: intergroup relations, interpersonal perception, intimate relations, clinical psychology, and sports psychology. In the work-related literature, meta-perceptions spanned three broad clusters: leadership and followership, identity and diversity, and work team dynamics (see Tables 1 and 2 for a representative selection of empirical studies according to each cluster). We were surprised to find little integration across these two literatures and limited research on meta-perception in work settings. Moreover, the term meta-perception is infrequently used in the work-related literature.

After consolidating our list of sources containing meta-perceptions across the work and non-work-related research, we adopted a three-wave coding strategy to integrate the fragmented literature into an overarching framework. To do so, first, our author team divided and read through all sources to uncover the fundamental components of meta-perceptions. Second, we re-coded each article to identify the component it examined and the central themes and relationships within it. Third, we synthesized the themes within all components across all papers to present this work in our integrated framework (a common

TABLE 1 Overview of representative non-work-related empirical articles on meta-perceptions per psychological literature stream

Authors	Content of meta-perception	Perceiver's meta-perception of (target)[a]
Intergroup relations		
Gordijn et al. (2008)	Identity (negative stereotype)	Ethnic in-group (out-group member)[b]
Santuzzi (2007)	Identity (traits, e.g., broad-minded)	Smoker (non-smoker)[b]
Santuzzi (2011)	Identity (traits, e.g., optimism)	Disabled individual (not-disabled)[b]
Swim et al. (2009)	Identity (negative stereotype)	LGB individual (public)[b]
Wout et al. (2010)	Relation (e.g., rude); competence (e.g., well-spoken)	Ethnic in-group (out-group member)[b]
Interpersonal perception		
Albright and Malloy (1999)	Identity (traits—big 5); competence (social)	Self (other)[b]
Carlson, Vazire, and Furr (2011)	Identity (traits, e.g., big 5, funny)	Self (new acquaintance/friend)[b]
Carlson and Furr (2009)	Identity (traits—big 5)	Self (parent/friend/college friend)[b]
Hebert and Vorauer (2003)	Competence (writing); relation (liking); identity (traits, e.g., sincere)	Self (other)[b]
Levesque (1997)	Relation (liking)	Self (other)[b]
Malloy and Janowski (1992)	Competence (leadership, quality of ideas)	Self (other)[b]
Malloy et al. (2007)	Relation (e.g., popularity); competence (e.g., academic ability)	Self (peers)[c]
Intimate relations		
Cook and Douglas (1998)	Relation (cooperativeness, assertiveness)	Self (parent/sibling)[b]
Marcus and Miller (2003)	Relation (attractiveness)	Self (member of opposite sex)[b]
Sciangula and Morry (2009)	Identity (traits, e.g., quiet); relation (loving)	Self (spouse)[b]
Swami et al. (2010)	Relation (attractiveness)	Self (spouse)[d]
Clinical psychology		
Carlson, Vazire, and Oltmanns (2011)	Identity (traits e.g., honesty); relation (attractiveness)	Narcissist (stranger, friend, coworker)[b]
De Jong and Peters (2005)	Identity (traits e.g., likeability, reliability)	Blushing phobic (other)[b]
Moritz and Roberts (2020)	Relation (acceptance, rejection)	Depressed (new acquaintance)[b]
Sports psychology		
Adie and Jowett (2010)	Relation (e.g., trust)	Athlete (coach)[e]
Cecchini et al. (2015)	Competence (sports ability, success)	Athlete (coach)[e]
Jackson et al. (2014)	Competence (sports ability)	Athlete (teammates)[e]

[a]For example, Santuzzi (2011) studied disabled individuals' beliefs about how non-disabled individuals see their personality (e.g., how optimistic they think they find them).
[b]Students.
[c]Children.
[d]Other.
[e]Athletes.

TABLE 2 Overview of representative work-related empirical articles examining meta-perceptions

Authors	Content of meta-perception	Perceiver's meta-perception of (target)[a]
Leadership and followership		
Hu et al. (2014)	Competence (job performance)	Employee (leader)
Qu et al. (2015)	Competence (creativity)	Subordinate (leader)
Tan and Jamal (2006)	Competence (technical competence)	Auditor (subordinate, peer, superior)
Taylor et al. (2012)	Competence (interpersonal competence)	Leader (subordinate, peer, superiors
Taylor et al. (2016)	Competence (leadership ability)	Female leader (subordinate, peer, superior)
Identity and diversity		
Kim et al. (2019)	Identity (who I am)	Self (co-worker)
Meister et al. (2017)[b]	Identity (gender, competence, role-based)	Women leader (colleague)
Purvanova (2013)	Identity (feeling "known")	Self (teammates)
Ryan et al. (2015)	Identity (age stereotype)	Younger employee (colleague)
Tuohy and Wrennall (1995)	Identity (profession), relation (liking)	Policemen (public)
Von Hippel et al. (2013)	Identity (age stereotype)	Older employee (younger colleague)
Vough et al. (2013)[b]	Identity (role, profession)	Professional (public, client)
Work team dynamics		
Brion et al. (2015)	Relation (trust)	Self (teammates)[c]
Eisenkraft et al. (2017)	Relation (liking, competition)	Self (teammates)[c]
Elfenbein et al. (2009)	Competence (professional value)	Self (other)[c]
Grutterink et al. (2013)	Competence (team task expertise)	Self (teammates)[c]
Litrico and Choi (2013)	Competence (task ability)	Self (teammates)[c]
Santuzzi and Zoeckler (2019)	Identity (traits e.g., optimistic)	Self (teammates)[c]

[a]An example for how to read the table: Hu et al. (2014) studied how competent (content) employees (perceivers) think their supervisor (target) perceives them.
[b]Qualitative study.
[c]Students working in project teams.

approach in qualitative research, cf. Van Maanen, 1979, and literature reviews, cf. Caza et al., 2018). The results of this analysis form the organizing framework for this review, which we will now introduce.

3 | META-PERCEPTION: A COMPOSITE CONSTRUCT

Although there is consensus about the broad definition of meta-perception spanning the different literature streams, a closer examination reveals a composite construct that contains several components. We drew from the interpersonal perception literature to help us delineate these components because meta-perception is often considered a form of interpersonal perception (as it refers to people's evaluations of other people, instead of objects; Kenny, 1994). This work introduces and utilizes the social relations model (SRM; Back & Kenny, 2010; Kenny, 1994) to conceptually dissect interpersonal perceptions into their structural components that may change independently from one another: perceiver, the one who holds the meta-perception; target, the person or group that is meta-perceived; and their relationship.

This review aims to theoretically and conceptually contribute to the meta-perception literature, and, thus, a methodological discussion of this model is beyond our scope (please refer instead to Kenny, 1994, and Porter et al., 2019). However, the SRM framework is useful to define and understand the complex composite nature of meta-perceptions to integrate the findings spanning different literatures. This also allows us to identify research gaps in the study of meta-perceptions in the workplace. We apply this framework to explore meta-perceptions and further this by adding, based on our review, the component of the meta-perception's "content," which is implicit and not a variable in this statistical model. As each meta-perception has a content type (e.g., an attribute) on which it is based, it is important to include it in our framework to surface potential differential effects.

In summary, a meta-perception is a given person's (*perceiver's*) belief regarding the view that another person or group of people (*target*) holds of him or her, regarding a specific type of *content*. Implicit in this definition is the *relationship* between the target and the perceiver. For example, in the phrase, "I think that my teammate Stella believes I am a skilled software engineer," "I" is the perceiver, "Stella" is the target, and the content of the meta-perception is competence (software engineering skills). The relationship between them is that they are both members of a work team (a symmetrical relationship in terms of hierarchy). This componential distinction forms the four foundations of our framework: the type of perceived content, the attributes of the target and perceiver, and their interrelationship. Below, we integrate and summarize what has been addressed in both the work and non-work-related literature according to these components.

3.1 | Meta-perception content types

The content of a meta-perception is the attribute on which it is based. Many studies explore meta-perceptions (or meta-insight, reflected self, etc.) without discussing their specific content (in some cases, this is only indicated in the methods section). Conclusions are often drawn about effects as if the same processes occur for all content types

(e.g., those based on personality vs. competence). For example, Carlson, Vazire, and Furr (2011), Kenny (1994), and Santuzzi (2011) draw conclusions about meta-perceptions in general though they study specifically meta-perceptions of personality.

Our analysis suggests that the content of meta-perceptions in the current literature can be divided into three broad areas of exploration: *identity* (meta-perceptions about who I am or a role I hold; e.g., based on gender, personality, profession), *competence* (meta-perceptions about what I can or cannot do well; e.g., skills and abilities), and the interpersonal affective *relation* between the target and the perceiver (meta-perceptions about whether I am favorably regarded, liked, or trusted). This fits with the social identity perspective on meta-perception from King et al. (2008) and distinctions drawn in previous works between meta-perceptions of liking and competence (cf. Eisenkraft et al., 2017). Below, we present examples of studies in each domain as if they are clearly distinct, though some studies examine multiple content types (e.g., Hebert & Vorauer, 2003; Wout et al., 2010).

3.1.1 | Identity

An individual's self-identity is their subjective interpretation of who they are, based on, for example, personal attributes and characteristics, roles, relationships, group memberships, and socio-demographic characteristics (e.g., Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Caza et al., 2018). Because personality is generally considered a personal attribute, we classify meta-perceptions of personality as meta-perceptions pertaining to identity. Our review reveals that individuals form meta-perceptions based on how they believe others interpret and judge their identities, and because of their "personal" nature, meta-perceptions of identity have important implications.

In the non-work-related literature, specifically in intergroup relations studies, the focus lies on meta-perceptions of salient social identity characteristics (e.g., minority members' beliefs that others hold stereotypical views of them—so-called meta-stereotypes; Finkelstein et al., 2020; Vorauer et al., 2000). These meta-stereotypes can have strong—and primarily negative—effects on the affect, cognition, and behavior of the perceiver. For example, members of stereotyped groups have been shown to underperform when that stereotype is made salient or relevant to the task at hand. Under stereotype threat, women's performance in math and driving tests suffers (e.g., Picho et al., 2013), and African Americans perform worse on cognitive ability tests (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Moreover, identity-related meta-perceptions affect the positivity of intergroup interactions and the well-being of the perceiver. For example, Black students refrained from befriending white students when they thought the White students held a negative stereotypic image of them (Wout et al., 2010), and the psychological well-being of gay perceivers was negatively affected when they perceived homophobia during an interaction (Swim et al., 2009). In the interpersonal perception and clinical psychology literature, the content of meta-perceptions often involves matters of personal identity, such as the Big 5 personality traits

(cf. Albright & Malloy, 1999) or, in clinical psychology, personality disorders and the "dark side" of personality, such as narcissism (Carlson, Vazire, & Oltmanns, 2011).

Building on this, several studies related to meta-perceptions in the *workplace* pertain to stereotypes and explore topics such as stereotype threat (e.g., Manzi et al., 2019; Von Hippel et al., 2013) and meta-stereotypes in the workplace (e.g., Finkelstein et al., 2020; Luksyte et al., 2013). Some highlight the negative effects in the workplace of feeling perceived according to stereotypes based on social identity. For example, Ryan et al. (2015) found that, as younger workers were more self-conscious about being stereotyped, this influenced their moods and they were less satisfied with older co-workers. For older generations, feeling negatively stereotyped or judged by age have been linked to negative work attitudes, higher levels of retirement and turnover intentions (Von Hippel et al., 2013), and lowered perceived employability (e.g., Peters et al., 2019). Several studies explore meta-perception with regard to specific personal and social identities and the perceived bias and judgment they encounter (e.g., racial minorities: Wout et al., 2010; gender or pregnancy: Little et al., 2015; sexual orientation: Ragins & Cornwell, 2001; chronic illness: McGonagle & Barnes-Farrell, 2014).

A small but growing number of studies in the identity literature depart from social identities and stereotypes to explore meta-perception as linked to individuals' occupation or role-based identities (e.g., Ashforth et al., 2017; Meister et al., 2017; Vough et al., 2013). Often conceptually grounded in self-verification or impression-management theories, this research explores how the belief that others confirm one's identity has positive implications for work relationships, socialization, work attitudes, and performance (e.g., Cable & Kay, 2012; Purvanova, 2013; Swann et al., 2000). In sum, this literature suggests that people want to feel seen by others according to their own self-identities, and when a discrepancy between self-identity and perceived identification or labels from others exists, it leads to negative consequences for well-being and motivation, relationships, and other work outcomes such as performance and turnover.

3.1.2 | Competence

Competence is generally defined as a person's knowledge, skills, abilities, and other attributes that contribute to realizing their maximal performance (Elliot & Dweck, 2005). It is not surprising, therefore, that many studies on the meta-perception of competence are found in domains in which performance is central, such as sports, school, and work. In sports psychology, a growing number of meta-perception studies focus, for example, on athletes and how "successful" or "competent" they believe their coaches or teammates find them (Adie & Jowett, 2010; Cecchini et al., 2015; Jackson et al., 2014). These studies show that meta-perceptions of competence can predict performance over and above self-perceptions of competence. In other non-work-related literature, meta-perception of competence is less central and generally measured as one of many attributes (cf. Malloy et al., 2007).

Regarding work-related research, we find meta-perceptions of competence heavily located in the leadership and followership literature. At work, competence is a valued individual characteristic, which may explain why meta-perceptions of expertise have important implications for employee motivation and performance (e.g., Grutterink et al., 2013). In this line of research, studies explore how employees believe their leaders evaluate their competence, and how that relates to their performance (e.g., technical competence: Tan & Jamal, 2006; task and contextual performance: Hu et al., 2014). For example, Qu et al. (2015) found that employees' beliefs of how their supervisors assess their creativity (leader creativity expectations) can improve their actual creativity. Having a leader affirm one's performance potential (e.g., being assigned stretch goals beyond one's current level of achievement) can be an important source of motivation because individuals want to fulfill the positive expectations of others they care about (Eden, 1992).

Meta-perceptions of competence seem to be particularly related to task performance at work. For example, reflected self-efficacy (a form of meta-perception regarding how others assess their ability to perform) predicted creative performance over and above self-rated self-efficacy (Litrico & Choi, 2013). Additionally, the more employees believe that their organization, supervisors, and peers recognize and affirm their individual value, competence, expertise, and abilities in relation to their individual or team tasks, the better they perform (e.g., perceived expertise affirmation: Grutterink et al., 2013; meta-perceptions of job performance: Hu et al., 2014). This corresponds to research that suggests that people continuously strive for affirmation of positive aspects of their identity at work (e.g., Ashforth et al., 2017) because of their fundamental need to feel valued by others they deem important.

3.1.3 | Relation (affective relationship)

In the non-work-related meta-perception literature, research tends to regard the affective relationship as existing between the target and the perceiver (e.g., liking and attractiveness), particularly spanning the interpersonal perception (e.g., Hebert & Vorauer, 2003; Levesque, 1997) and intimate relations (e.g., Cook & Douglas, 1998; Marcus & Miller, 2003) research. Meta-perceptions of affective relations are shown to influence the relationship between the target and perceiver(s). For example, Cook and Douglas (1998) showed that greater perceived acceptance (a meta-perception) by same-sex peers leads to a more positive social standing in the peer system. In romantic relationships, meta-perceived attractiveness has been shown to predict romantic love, relationship satisfaction, and lowered intention to quit the relationship (cf. Sciangula & Morry, 2009; Swami et al., 2010). Moreover, in intergroup relations, research has shown that people from one group who believe that another group does not like them, are reluctant to interact with this other group (cf. Gordijn et al., 2008), and are more likely to start interactions with them in an angry and hostile manner (Butz & Plant, 2006).

Studies exploring the group engagement model (Tyler & Blader, 2003) and self-determination theory of Deci and Ryan (2008)

explain how this outcome materializes. Their work indicates that when group members' need to belong to a group is fulfilled, it increases their intrinsic motivation and interpersonal tendency to help the group. Thus, people who think that the group they belong to likes and values them (a meta-perception) tend to show more commitment and cooperation, take more responsibility, and accept more obligations (e.g., Rand et al., 2009; Tyler & Blader, 2003).

However, very few work-related studies examine meta-perceptions of affective relations, such as interpersonal attraction and liking. One exception is Tuohy and Wrennall's (1995) study of how members of the police conceptualize the attitude of the general public toward them (and how this impacts their work). Further, more recently, Eisenkraft et al. (2017) examined meta-accuracy among car sellers to find that they were relatively accurate about determining who among their colleagues *liked* them but less accurate about estimating who competed with them. More recent studies focus on the importance of felt trust, or trust meta-perception, in the development of actual trust between team members (Brion et al., 2015) and between leaders and their subordinates (Campagna et al., 2020).

3.1.4 | Summary

Our review reveals that three content types are studied most prominently: identity, competence, and relation. First, integrating the different literature streams demonstrates that the effects of meta-perceptions may depend on their content, yet this has not been systematically examined. Studies spanning all the literatures highlight the importance of feeling seen for who one "truly is" (one's *identity*) for factors like motivation, well-being, and performance. In the work-related literature, we note this particularly in explorations of meta-stereotypes (e.g., age-based meta-stereotypes; Peters et al., 2019), reflected identity (e.g., Meister et al., 2017; Purvanova, 2013), and self-verification at work (e.g., Swann et al., 2009). Second, in both the work-related and the non-work-related literature, the majority of studies on the meta-perception of competence have focused on predicting performance outcomes. Especially, studies in sports psychology and organizational behavior suggest that meta-perceptions of *competence* may improve both task and creative performance. Third, the intimate and intergroup relations literatures show that perceived *affect* in the *relationship* may be influential in establishing positive and cooperative interactions. In short, acknowledging and considering the content type more systematically is a potentially interesting pathway forward for researchers to understand meta-perceptions and their impact in the workplace.

3.2 | Meta-perception: Target, perceiver, and their relationship

Research suggests that people tend to use their self-perception as the most important information for their meta-perceptions and often do not adjust them based on contextual cues (Hu et al., 2014;

Kaplan et al., 2009; Kenny & DePaulo, 1993). This can be partly explained by people's failure to consider that others do not possess the same information they do but also potentially because studies in this domain often assess meta-perceptions in experimental lab settings with strangers, instead of long-term field settings (cf. Carlson et al., 2011; Hu et al., 2014; Kaplan et al., 2009, for a similar observation). Some studies show, however, that in certain situations, people do adjust their meta-perceptions based on the context (e.g., Elfenbein et al., 2009; Santuzzi, 2007). Our review suggests that three factors are particularly important for understanding meta-perceptions: attributes of the target (e.g., generalized or specific other), attributes of the perceiver (e.g., qualities such as self-esteem, and narcissism), and the relation between them (including intergroup or interpersonal processes, level of acquaintance, and status/or power [a]symmetry).

It is important to note that, although the target, perceiver, and their interrelationship are distinct components in the SRM, and in experimental settings they can be manipulated independently, our review indicates that in practice they are often intertwined. Attributes of the perceiver (e.g., leadership style) studied are often linked to the perceiver's relationship with the target (e.g., leader and subordinate). In the identity and diversity literature, meta-perceptions of minority group members generally regard the majority group, and leader meta-perceptions are often tied to their followers (and vice versa). For conceptual clarity, we nonetheless explore them separately.

3.2.1 | Types of targets: Generalized, differential, or dyadic other

The SRM makes a helpful conceptual distinction in the type of target that is meta-perceived. This "other" individual may be a "generalized," "differential," or "dyadic" other (cf. Kenny, 1994). A meta-perception of a "generalized" other refers to how a perceiver thinks *others in general* see him/her (e.g., "People see me as extraverted"). For example, Tuohy and Wrennall (1995) examined how members of the Scottish police force believe the *general public* sees them. A meta-perception of a "differential" other refers to how an individual thinks people from different social groups see him/her (e.g., "I think my co-workers see me as extraverted, but my family see me as introverted"). Carlson and Furr (2009), for example, differentiated between meta-perceptions of a parent, a college friend, and a hometown friend. A meta-perception of a "dyadic" other refers to how one thinks a *specific other individual* sees him/her (e.g., "I think John sees me as extraverted, whereas Jane finds me introverted").

This distinction is important because studies show that the level of *accuracy* of the meta-perception may depend on the type of target. For example, although people determine the general impression they make relatively well (i.e., generalized meta-accuracy), how well they determine how specific others view them may depend on their level of acquaintance with the target or the social group to which they belong (i.e., dyadic meta-accuracy; Eisenkraft et al., 2017; Kenny, 1994; Kenny & DePaulo, 1993; Levesque, 1997).

For some content types of meta-perception (e.g., intelligence: Carlson, Vazire, & Furr, 2011; past performance: Kaplan et al., 2009), people seem to assume they make the same impression on all interaction partners, without considering the variation that might exist with specific others with whom they have had different interactions. For more specific interpersonal relational constructs, such as friendship, liking, and humor, it may be easier to differentiate specific others' unique evaluations (Kenny, 1994; Levesque, 1997), because feedback for these affective-related elements may be more readily monitored and distinguished (Eisenkraft et al., 2017). Moreover, our review suggests that meta-accuracy may also differ for specific subtypes of meta-perceptions of competence; that is, employees' meta-accuracy was higher for task performance than for contextual performance which is a less concrete or visible indicator of competence (Hu et al., 2014).

3.2.2 | Attributes of the perceiver

Personal attributes play an important role in how people shape their *self*-perceptions and thus can likewise affect how they form their meta-perceptions. For example, attributes such as self-esteem, self-handicapping, or self-stereotyping can cause the perceiver to over- or under-estimate other's evaluations. To illustrate, one study found that individuals with low self-esteem tended to overestimate how much others see them as having chronic self-doubt and anxiety (Cameron et al., 2011). Another study found that individuals who have high "fear of blushing" (blushing phobia) overestimated the negative judgments of others and thus expected more negative outcomes from blushing (De Jong & Peters, 2005). In clinical psychology, the central question is whether people who score high on clinical pathopsychological measures, such as phobia or narcissism, have different meta-perceptions than people from non-clinical groups (e.g., whether depressed people think others like them less; Moritz & Roberts, 2020). There is less research regarding how individual characteristics influence meta-perceptions in the workplace (baring some studies of identity-related content, e.g., age: Finkelstein et al., 2020, or gender: Taylor et al., 2016). However, extrapolating findings from the non-work-related literature reveals that individual differences, such as personality traits (e.g., narcissism or neuroticism) or self-esteem, can determine how positive or accurate employees' meta-perceptions are, and in turn, influence their effects.

3.2.3 | The relationship between the target and the perceiver

The relationship between the target and the perceiver can be considered from multiple (and often nested) levels of analysis and may have implications for both the meta-perception and its outcomes.

First, our review reveals that it matters for meta-perception construction whether an interpersonal or intergroup relation is salient to the perceiver. That is, whether the perceiver is triggered by the

context or the interaction at hand to see or label the target as an individual person or as a member of a social or "other" group (see also Frey & Tropp, 2006). There may, for example, be a difference in how Stella thinks Mary sees her in an interpersonal setting (e.g., as a specific friend, neighbor, or co-worker) versus in an intergroup setting (e.g., as a member of the White [the perceiver, Stella] and the Black community [the target, Mary]).

Meta-accuracy can change when the target is seen as someone from a specific social group, in relation to the perceiver's own social group, and due to their interpersonal relationship (cf., Kenny, 1994; Kenny & DePaulo, 1993; Levesque, 1997). For example, in intergroup relations studies, individuals from at least two different social groups interact (or anticipate interaction). The social groups vary from police members to members of minority groups based on people's ethnicity or sexual preference (e.g., Swim et al., 2009; Tuohy & Wrennall, 1995; Wout et al., 2010). The premise about intergroup relations here is that the cues people rely on to form meta-perceptions depend on whether their interaction partner is from their own group (an in-group member) or from a different group (an out-group member). That is, when interacting with an out-group member, meta-perceptions are often based on social stereotypes instead of individual characteristics, such as personality or values (Frey & Tropp, 2006; King et al., 2008). Lees and Cikara (2020) showed in the context of U.S. politics that a negative bias in group meta-perception arose across multiple competitive (but not cooperative) intergroup contexts and exacerbated intergroup conflict. An intervention that informed participants of the inaccuracy of their beliefs reduced negative out-group attributions. These findings suggest a crucial role for meta-perceptions in determining whether intergroup cooperation goes smoothly or results in conflict.

Second, hierarchy influences these relationships. In intergroup relations studies, the participants (perceivers) are often from a minority or lower-status group and are asked about an (anticipated) interaction with others (targets) from a majority or higher-status group (e.g., gay vs. heterosexual individuals, or gender or racial minorities). Those with lower power or status may be particularly concerned with deciphering (and managing) how negatively they are viewed by those with higher status or power (cf. Lammers et al., 2008). In addition, research has shown that in intergroup interactions majority group members also have evaluative concerns, but from a different nature (i.e., about how prejudiced they may come across toward the minority group; Gordijn et al., 2008; Vorauer et al., 2000). Finally, some research shows that interventions that are based on increasing positivity of meta-stereotypes may improve intergroup relations between generations (Fowler & Gasiorek, 2020), potentially by flattening the perceived status differences between the social groups involved. Yet although the status dynamic between groups underlies many studies related to meta-perceptions between groups, still very few studies explore how hierarchy and status specifically influence the formation of meta-perceptions and their effects.

A specific type of interpersonal, hierarchical relationship at work is explored in the leadership and followership literature. A growing number of studies examine how employees believe they are evaluated by their supervisors and vice versa, as this relationship is imbued with power and status differentials and is important for a wealth of work-outcomes (e.g., leadership effectiveness: Taylor et al., 2012, and employee creativity: Qu et al., 2015). A robust finding related to this is that meta-accuracy *increases* for people with low status or power, especially in evaluative contexts where others' evaluations are salient and/or meaningful to them (e.g., perceiving how your team leader assesses your competence). In those circumstances, people are more motivated to use context-specific information in addition to more general self-views to form their meta-perceptions (Carlson, Vazire, & Furr, 2011; Elfenbein et al., 2009; Kaplan et al., 2009; Santuzzi, 2007).

Third, studies in interpersonal relations often place more emphasis on the level of acquaintance—the affective relationship—between the perceiver and a more specific target. This relationship is generally symmetrical with respect to hierarchy and status (e.g., friends, co-workers, and fellow students; see Carlson, Vazire, & Furr, 2011, for a review), with a focus on meta-perceptions of positive feelings, such as liking and attractiveness (e.g., Hebert & Vorauer, 2003; Marcus & Miller, 2003), which can predict positive outcomes like relationship satisfaction and lowered intention to quit the relationship (cf. Sciangula & Morry, 2009; Swami et al., 2010).

Some work explores meta-accuracy as a function of the level of acquaintance for a broad range of traits that capture key facets of personality (e.g., the Big 5, negative traits, and well-being) and play a central role in interpersonal perception (e.g., being funny, intelligent, or physically attractive; Carlson, Vazire, & Furr, 2011). This review and other work (Elfenbein et al., 2009) suggest that people are rather good at determining how specific differential others see them.

In summary, the relationship between the target and the perceiver has implications for meta-perceptions in the workplace, influencing factors, such as how they are formed (e.g., based on what content), which targets "matter" more than others, and the effects of meta-perceptions on workplace outcomes. Specifically, we expect that meta-perceptions of targets who are very closely acquainted, more powerful, of higher status, or important to the perceiver in some way will have a more powerful influence on the affect, cognition, or behavior than the meta-perceptions of unimportant (or less powerful or lower status) targets. These are important moderators that future work must systematically incorporate when examining the effects of meta-perception.

4 | GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this conceptual review was to examine the state of our knowledge regarding meta-perceptions in the workplace. Our review suggests that whereas a wealth of research shows that meta-perceptions can have important implications for affect, behavior, and cognition, the findings from the broader psychological and work-related literatures have—until now—only been loosely connected. Drawing these literature strands together, we offer an integrated meta-perception framework that distinguishes four components: content, target, perceiver, and the relationship between the target and perceiver. Delineating these components allows better understanding

of what we know—and do not know—about meta-perception in the workplace and offers several pathways for future research.

First, our review shows that although the content of the meta-perception may be influential in determining its outcomes (and its accuracy), there has been no systematic examination of the significance and effects of meta-perceptions with different content types. Further, although some work-related studies explore identity and competence, few focus on meta-perceptions concerning the affective relation between target and perceiver (i.e., the question of whether the target is liked, trusted, or valued). In future work, researchers might contrast identity-, competence-, or relation-related meta-perceptions to determine how they influence outcomes differently, which could ultimately help leaders manage their subordinates' goals, needs, and aspirations more effectively. For example, to some employees, it may be more important for their job satisfaction, well-being, or commitment to feel liked by others (relation), whereas other employees might want to feel known (identity) or acknowledged as an expert (competence). The impression-management literature highlights different behaviors and tactics people employ to manage these meta-perceptions. For example, Crawford et al. (2019) discovered that when employees wanted their supervisor to *like* them more, they engaged in ingratiation (gave compliments, did favors, etc.), and when they wanted to appear *competent*, they engaged in self-promotion (drawing attention to their accomplishments or abilities). Consequently, to transform knowledge about the effects of meta-perceptions into actionable insights at work, it is important that future research is specific regarding its content. Equally important is to examine whether the positive effects from non-work-related literature (e.g., feeling liked in a social capacity) can be translated to the workplace (e.g., feeling liked at work and how it supports employees' intention to remain).

Second, we conclude that clarity regarding the attributes of the target of the meta-perception (e.g., whether it is a generalized, specific, or dyadic other), of the perceiver (e.g., confidence or self-stereotyping), and their interrelationship (intergroup or interpersonal, hierarchy, and level of acquaintance) may be key to understanding the accuracy and effects of meta-perceptions. Currently, few studies make this distinction or acknowledge how this may influence their results and implications. Future research could benefit from our framework to paint a more complete picture, and could explore this by drawing on methodology outlined by the SRM (see Porter et al., 2019, and Santuzzi & Zoeckler, 2019, for similar calls) to account for why and how meta-accuracy varies based on these variables, and how this affects workplace outcomes.

Meta-perceptions are inherently relational in nature (because they concern people's beliefs about how others see them) and are subject to the potential differences at play in their components (i.e., the target, perceiver, and their relationship). For example, for identity-related content (e.g., age meta-stereotype; "older workers find us lazy"), whether one feels stereotyped may be more related to which (out)group the target belongs to, whereas for an individual attribute, such as competence, meta-perception may be more related to the self-perception of the perceiver. In contrast, relational content

(e.g., liking) relies heavily on the relationship between target and perceiver, because liking is highly dyadic and people recognize rather well how much specific others like them. Our framework also helps integrate knowledge about, for example, dyadic relations outside work (e.g., between romantic partners) with dyadic relations at work (e.g., between team members or leaders and followers), or intergroup meta-perceptions (e.g., stereotyping) with intergroup dynamics in organizations (e.g., prejudice between departments).

Third, studies in the work-related literature often assume—yet do not specifically measure—meta-perception, meaning that the literature empirically examining meta-perception at work is scarcer than it first appears. Research on impression management (e.g., how employees attempt to affect the image others have of them; Bolino et al., 2016; Crawford et al., 2019), self-verification (e.g., if one feels that others see their true self; Swann et al., 2009), leaders' self-awareness (i.e., the extent to which they are aware of their personal resources to affect others; e.g., Fleenor et al., 2010) or self-monitoring (e.g., an individual's observation of and control over their behavior guided by external cues; Kudret et al., 2019) all refer to individuals forming ideas of how they are perceived by the external world and acting on this information. However, the meta-perception itself is often neither acknowledged nor measured. We also find fragmented studies that label meta-perception differently (e.g., reflected-self or reflected appraisal), meaning that this work has not yet been integrated with the meta-perception literature. We thus call for future research to explicitly address and include the meta-perception and to decouple it from the effect it triggers so that its role in shaping key organizational phenomena is better understood.

Fourth, regarding methodology, this review aimed to first create a theoretical integration of this field. The natural next step for future work would be to delve into the strengths and limitations of the nature of the samples and fragmented methodologies used to study meta-perception. It is important to realize that, in general, research in the non-work-related literature is highly based on student samples. However, in the work-related literature, the use of student samples is less prominent and when they are used, these often comprise MBA students who work together on a longer project that is often business- or work-related. One could assume that the external generalizability of the latter findings to the work context is substantially higher than for many other studies. This is especially the case in the intergroup and interpersonal relations paradigms that tend to use experimental designs in which participants, who have not met before and will not meet again form impressions of one another. In short, there is ample opportunity for future research to examine whether findings from student samples are generalizable to the work context.

Moreover, we note that studies related to meta-perception in the workplace rely on various methods, from qualitative studies (e.g., Meister et al., 2014; Vough et al., 2013), to social network approaches (e.g., Grutterink et al., 2013; Polzer et al., 2002), or discrepancy scores between individuals and leaders (e.g., Fleenor et al., 2010; Polzer et al., 2002), to the SRM (Porter et al., 2019; Santuzzi & Zoeckler, 2019). Studies using the specific term "meta-perception" in both the work-related and non-work-related literature

more frequently rely on the SRM, whereas studies that essentially capture meta-perception but do not use this term or mention this literature (such as those exploring "identity asymmetries," "the looking glass," or "reflected self-appraisal") often employ OLS or HLM regression or even qualitative methods.

Although these methods help us explore various questions, we find that there is little sharing of "methodology" and, thus, integration of results across domains. To facilitate the systematic integration and examination of the various components of the meta-perceptions, which could enable researchers to conduct an empirical meta-analysis, the SRM may offer a way forward (Back & Kenny, 2010; Kenny, 1994). By dividing interpersonal perceptions and behaviors into three independent components (target, perceiver, and relationship variance), this model examines intriguing questions, such as whether and which meta-perceptions are largely based on self-perception or depend on the relationship (e.g., level of acquaintance) and how reciprocal they are (if John thinks Sandy likes him, does Sandy also think he likes her?). For example, Gundlach et al. (2006) used the SRM to show that the negative relationship between team members' individualism and team performance is mediated by meta-perception, and Santuzzi and Zoeckler (2019) used the SRM to show that meta-perceptions in virtual teams varied in response to role changes. Recent groundbreaking work by Porter et al. (2019) extends the SRM with a statistical package in R to capture meta-perceptions at work, addressing content, target and perceiver, and their interrelation.

5 | SETTING A RESEARCH AGENDA: META-PERCEPTIONS AT WORK

From our review, we find that there are three sub-domains of the work-related literature that most often draw on or refer to meta-perceptions: leadership and followership, identity and diversity, and work team dynamics. Thus, in addition to our general findings and conclusions, we offer implications and a future research agenda for these key domains.

5.1 | Leadership and followership

The literature on meta-perceptions in leadership and followership remains a small body of work that offers much promise for future research. For example, our review highlights that followers are particularly interested in determining how their leaders evaluate them, with respect to their competence at work. This is no surprise, as research shows that meta-stereotypes (an identity-based meta-perception) can particularly influence one's emotions when there is a potential for being *evaluated* in some way (Vorauer et al., 2000). Given the importance of leader-follower relations at work, future work may also explore meta-perceptions based on different types of content (e.g., identity-based, or relation-based content, such as liking), personal attributes of the follower and the leader (e.g., personality or leadership style), and their

relationship (e.g., power distance or level of acquaintance), to shed light on meta-perceptions and their effects. Recent work shows that leader behavior has important implications for employee well-being (Inceoglu et al., 2018). Building on this, future studies could explore whether and when employees' meta-perceptions of their leader (e.g., based on competence or liking) influence their well-being and mental health. It would be especially interesting to subsequently examine whether such effects are more pronounced depending on the type of leadership behaviors (e.g., participative, transformational, passive, or transactional leadership behaviors).

Moreover, studies reveal that female leaders tend to underpredict how their supervisors rate them regarding their leadership and competence (Taylor et al., 2016). This dynamic may be triggered by the higher scrutiny experienced by these women who are often minorities in senior leadership (Meister et al., 2017). Taylor et al. (2016) also find more self-other agreement for leaders with higher levels of agreeableness and neuroticism, indicating that those who are more focused on others' feedback or who experience more social anxiety are more preoccupied with how others see them.

In addition, meta-perceptions are assumed to be underlying mechanisms in the large body of work on leader self-awareness, which often relies on multi-source feedback to measure leader self-awareness (i.e., the degree of alignment between a leader's self-ratings and the ratings of others; e.g., Fleenor et al., 2010). This work suggests that higher self-awareness (as measured by the degree of self-other rating alignment) can predict and improve leader performance and effectiveness. However, it examines the difference between leader self- and other-ratings (of the leader) and does not explicitly capture how the leader (or follower) believes others see them (the meta-perception itself). This has led several authors to call for the explicit incorporation of meta-perceptions into the leadership literature. For example, Taylor (2010) and Taylor et al. (2012) argue that leader self-awareness consists of two parts: (1) self-awareness (knowing oneself) and (2) anticipating and caring about how others perceive and evaluate you and your impact on others. These scholars argue that the leadership literature focuses primarily on the first part of self-awareness (self-perception) and has omitted the critical second part of self-awareness (meta-perception). Highlighting the need for this, Taylor et al. (2012) show that leader meta-perceptions are distinct from self-other ratings and can explain more variance than self-other ratings in predicting leader effectiveness. Leaders are more effective when they are better able to view their leadership from the perspective of their followers. It also triggers the questions: if meta-perceptions are so important to leadership outcomes, can leaders learn to better decipher how they are seen by others? If so, how? Does leadership development training sufficiently explore and build these skills?

5.2 | Identity and diversity at work

The diversity research related to meta-perceptions at work focuses heavily on the experience of feeling negatively stereotyped (*content of the meta-perception*) according to an individual's social identity

(*attribute of the perceiver*) by a dominant or more powerful "other" group (*the relationship between target and perceiver*). Interestingly, when it comes to content, the largest part of this empirical research at work examines meta-perception (meta-stereotype) related to *age*. Isolated studies explore meta-perceptions based on other social identities, such as race, gender, sexual orientation, or another stigmatized or minority identity. This provides a wealth of opportunity to consolidate and deepen our understanding of the experience of other minority or stigmatized groups at work by exploring how their meta-perceptions (e.g., related to the intersectionality of their identities, competence, and liking for example) may relate to affect, cognition, and behaviors and ultimately influence important outcomes, such as well-being, inclusion, and satisfaction.

Research also suggests that in minority (or stigmatized) groups people may become more prone to thinking about others' perceptions (e.g., Meister et al., 2017), due to the heightened need to minimize parts of their identities to "fit in." Future research might explore how this cognitively consuming and potentially stressful cycle can be disrupted, reduced, and managed in the workplace. Further, although most diversity research focuses on how those in minority or stigmatized groups experience meta-perception, there is room to explore meta-perceptions from the perspective of the "majority." We might, for example, ask how their meta-perceptions (of how they feel they are seen, by whom, and with respect to what content) can influence *their* experience and behavior (e.g., toward the minority group) at work.

Also, studies on meta-stereotypes tend to assume that stereotypes have a negative valence. But what if a stereotype is positive (e.g., Asian people are good at math)? Our review of the meta-stereotype literature reveals that there is little work on "positive" meta-stereotypes specifically. However, some recent work on positive effects of positive meta-stereotypes (of age) suggests that, indeed, positive meta-perceptions can improve intergroup contact in non-work groups (Fowler & Gasiorek, 2020). Given these recent findings, and the strong evidence that having others see you in a more positive light can be motivating at work, and influence performance and creativity, future research may integrate this general striving for people to be regarded in a positive light at work with the work on meta-stereotypes and examine the effects of positive stereotypes and their effects on affect, cognition, and behavior in the workplace.

Identity research is moving toward exploring meta-perceptions related to other personally relevant identities at work (e.g., not specifically related to social-identity or minority categories). This research focuses, for example, on how people strive to be known (e.g., Cable & Kay, 2012), the impact of feeling misidentified (e.g., Meister et al., 2014; Vough et al., 2013), the effects of being self-verified (or not) at work (e.g., Swann et al., 2009), and how people manage and monitor others' impressions (e.g., Crawford et al., 2019). Again, this literature rarely empirically measures meta-perception (for exceptions, see Meister et al., 2017; Purvanova, 2013) or elaborates on it (e.g., how do I believe others see me and why might this matter?). This creates the opportunity for identity, self-verification, and impression-management research to not only empirically measure meta-perceptions but also delve into its content and how different attributes of the perceiver and the relationship might influence its effects. For example, do certain targets matter more than others when it comes to acknowledging our professional identities? Who really needs to "know" us at work? Is it better for work outcomes that we believe our peers "know us" and affirm our diverse identities than our supervisors? Overall, new insight into meta-perception with respect to diverse identities at work can provide ideas for how to buffer their potentially negative effects and further our understanding of how to create diverse and inclusive workplaces.

5.3 | Work team and other contexts

Although there is a growing amount of empirical research examining meta-perceptions in work teams, our review reveals that there are multiple opportunities (cf. Grutterink et al., 2013; King et al., 2008; Porter et al., 2019) to develop our understanding of how meta-perceptions can influence team behavior and outcomes. Future research, for example, might explore meta-perceptions (and their content and effects) over time in organizational work teams. When a new team is first formed, members may be more concerned with whether they are liked, whereas, after some time working together, they may also want (or expect) their team members to know and accept them for who they are (e.g., self-verification or meta-perception of identity). After the midpoint in a team's time together (Gersick, 1988), teams tend to shift from a relational to a task-performance focus, which may in turn ignite team members' need to be seen as competent. The need to be acknowledged for competence and expertise can also play a role during the entire team process. To truly understand meta-perception processes in organizations, it is important to examine the nature and consequences of meta-perceptions at all relevant levels of analysis: the organizational, team, dyadic, and individual (cf. Ashforth et al., 2011).

Similarly, there are other important work-related situations and interactions in which meta-perceptions are likely to play a key role. One could expect that, for example, when engaging in a performative activity (such as teaching or presenting at a meeting) or high-pressure situations (e.g., negotiations, job interviews, or difficult conversations at work), meta-perceptions may influence the state of the individual and, in turn, their behavior. Although a few studies have focused on these matters (e.g., Cecchini et al., 2015; Grutterink et al., 2013; Jackson et al., 2014; Qu et al., 2015), we encourage researchers to explore this in various work-related settings. They may also explore meta-perceptions related to states and emotions, which is an area less explored yet teeming with potential (e.g., Kleinlogel et al., 2020).

6 | CONCLUSION

Research related to meta-perception has flourished across several literatures, demonstrating its importance for affect, behavior, and cognition. However, this literature has not only remained highly

fragmented, but also the phenomenon of meta-perception has been referred to by many different names, with little consolidated application to work settings. In this review, we have synthesized this body of literature to provide an integrated framework for the understanding of meta-perceptions and their important effects at work. In doing so, we highlight what we know and still do not know about meta-perceptions at work and offer key questions for future exploration. Focusing on the work-related literature, we provide a pathway for scholars to integrate meta-perceptions into the work-related literature and to unleash their potential for future research.

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ENDNOTE

[1] Although Kenny (1994) did not coin this term in the realm of the psychology of interpersonal processes (e.g., Laing et al., 1966, used the same term), he was the first to provide a seminal theoretical review of meta-perception and most later work relies on his 1994 definition.

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