

**The Moralization of Intrinsic Motivation**

by

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## **Dedication**

To all the wonderful sculptors in my life,  
my family, my friends, my mentors,  
and three furballs who never kept me bored.

## **Acknowledgments**

What can a piece of rock achieve? It could sit still as part of the scenery. But if it is lucky, it will meet a master sculptor who will transform it into a masterpiece. I sometimes feel like that piece of rock: eager to be something, but not knowing how. But master sculptors generously came to me and helped me become a work of art. They gave me knowledge, wisdom, and an academic soul, as Pygmalion did for Galatea.

This is how I feel when I think about my relationships with my advisors. In the third year of my doctoral program, I decided to pursue a whole new topic. At that time, I was insecure and incompetent in many ways: I had lots of ideas and had received some positive comments on my communication skills but also quite negative feedback on my writing, an essential skill for an academic. After two years, I now sit here finishing my dissertation with two chapters invited to revise and resubmit. Working on this dissertation has been happy and rewarding. I sometimes woke up in the morning feeling energized just because I got one more day to work. How could this happen? It all happened thanks to other people; people who built a village for me, an intellectual kid, in which to run around and learn and grow. During my time in the job market, I realized how exceptional my doctoral study experiences were. It was indeed too good to be true.

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## Abstract

Business research and practice have emphasized the value of intrinsic motivation for over 50 years. In my dissertation, I argue that this valuation can have unintended negative consequences for employees. Specifically, I suggest that employees may internalize the ways their colleagues, leaders, organizations, and society value intrinsic motivation and come to associate it with superior morality. In the theory chapter, I conceptualize this process as *the moralization of intrinsic motivation* and describe how it shapes employees' negative value judgments of and behaviors toward others and themselves in the domains of performance appraisal, cooperation, and engagement. In the two subsequent empirical chapters, I show that (a) employees' intrinsic motivation may lead them to perceive teammates with higher intrinsic motivation as being more moral and deserving of help, and that (b) employees exaggerate their intrinsic motivation to others in order to appear moral and maintain positive relationships with the others. My dissertation contributes to the management literature by investigating the unintended negative outcomes of our long-standing emphasis on intrinsic motivation, and the relative disadvantages for employees who do not experience intrinsic motivation. I end by discussing the role of business research and education in potentially reducing the moralization of intrinsic motivation and its negative impacts.

## Chapter 1 Introduction

“In the new work culture, enduring or even merely liking one’s job is not enough. Workers should love what they do, and then promote that love on social media, thus fusing their identities to that of their employers. [...] It’s grim and exploitative (Griffith, 2019).”

Scholars and practitioners have researched and celebrated the positive value of intrinsic motivation (i.e., employees’ inherent satisfaction with their own work), highlighting intrinsically motivated employees as creative thinkers (Amabile, 1985, 1998) and high performers (Cerasoli, Nicklin, & Ford, 2014; Erez, Gopher, & Arzi, 1990; Grant, 2008). They engage in their work and do not burn out easily (Babakus, Yavas, & Karatepe, 2008). They also have an enhanced desire to help others both within (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006) and outside their organizations through their work (Grant & Berry, 2011). In recognition of these positive work attitudes and behaviors, organizational leaders have tried to increase intrinsic motivation by rewarding it at hiring (Derfler-Rozin & Pitesa, 2020; Woolley & Fishbach, 2018), during socialization (Peterson & Ruiz-quintanilla, 2003), and in performance appraisals (DeVoe & Iyengar, 2004). These examples suggest that organizations value intrinsically motivated employees for the positive work outcomes they produce.

At the crux of this dissertation is the idea that pervasive positive valuation of intrinsic motivation converts it into a normative issue. Specifically, employees may internalize the ways their colleagues, leaders, organizations, and society value intrinsic motivation and come to

perceive it to be a moral virtue. I conceptualize this process as *the moralization of intrinsic motivation*. When employees moralize intrinsic motivation, it ceases to be a harmless personal difference and instead becomes an arena that is guided by normative expectations. Employees positively judge others they believe to be intrinsically motivated and negatively judge those who they perceive as lacking intrinsic motivation. These positive and negative value judgments in turn justify employees' rewarding and punishing behaviors toward others and themselves; they affect not only performance evaluations (Derfler-Rozin & Pitesa, 2020; DeVoe & Iyengar, 2004) but also the decisions to cooperate or not with others, engagement or disengagement at work, and turnover intentions. In sum, I theorize how the valuation of intrinsic motivation prevalent in employees' social contexts shapes their perceptions and behaviors through moralization.

While moralization has been studied in other organizational contexts such as leadership (Fehr, Yam, Dang, Chi, & Yam, 2015), intrinsic motivation is an important place to examine moralization because its moralization may have far-reaching negative impacts on both employees who have intrinsic motivation and those who do not. Employees who have experienced intrinsic motivation and have come to moralize it feel an enhanced pressure to continue to be intrinsically motivated at work to maintain a positive self-image. They may further feel compelled to showcase their intrinsic motivation to prove their morality to others and gain positive social affirmation. Employees who lack intrinsic motivation, on the other hand, may feel distressed because they do not live up to the societal ideal of intrinsic motivation, especially if they work in a context where its value is particularly emphasized. They may also fear receiving negative evaluations at work even when their objective performance is no different from that of their intrinsically motivated colleagues. To avoid such negative judgments, these employees may pretend to be intrinsically motivated around their colleagues or, if the pressure

becomes too intense, decide to leave their work organization altogether. The moralization of intrinsic motivation, therefore, is crucial in explaining why a positive valuation of intrinsic motivation may harm employees regardless of their levels of intrinsic motivation.

This dissertation makes three contributions. First, I bring scholarly attention to the social aspects of intrinsic motivation. Scholars have defined intrinsic motivation in personal terms, for example as a stable trait over time (Amabile, Hill, Hennessey, & Tighe, 1994) or the relationship between individuals and their own work (Ryan & Deci, 2000). However, business researchers, thought leaders, and practitioners have emphasized its value for over 50 years, and intrinsic motivation is thus no longer an atomized phenomenon but rather a socially-valued standard. The current theoretical groundwork is among the first to specify why and how the valuation of intrinsic motivation in employees' social contexts leads to its moralization, which in turn shapes employees' social interactions. Second, I explain how moralization renders intrinsic motivation—a seemingly virtuous characteristic—harmful for employees. Recent studies have begun to show that intrinsic motivation can be associated with negative outcomes such as disengagement in uninteresting tasks (Shin & Grant, 2019) or expectation of financial sacrifice (Derfler-Rozin & Pitesa, 2020). The moralization of intrinsic motivation works as an underlying mechanism for these outcomes as well as other numerous negative consequences. This research thus contributes to the emerging literature on the dark side of intrinsic motivation (Derfler-Rozin & Pitesa, 2020; Kim, Campbell, Shepherd, & Kay, 2020; Shin & Grant, 2019).

Finally, as I theorize the negative consequences of the moralization of intrinsic motivation, I shed light on the experiences of employees who do not experience intrinsic motivation. Employees may lack intrinsic motivation for many reasons. For example, their personal circumstances may force them to work at jobs that most people find uninteresting (e.g.,

highly repetitive or dangerous jobs) for financial reasons. Likewise, employees from international or low socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds may experience weak intrinsic motivation because their families did not provide them with enough resources to find out what they like (Johnson, Mortimer, & Heckhausen, 2020) or because their country of origin did not particularly emphasize it. As a consequence, these employees' intrinsic motivation is likely weaker than that of employees from WEIRD (Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic; Jones, 2010) cultures. While the literature on intrinsic motivation has largely focused on intrinsically motivated employees themselves and their positive work experiences, I discuss the disadvantages that employees who lack intrinsic motivation likely experience. The moralization of intrinsic motivation, seen in this light, becomes another way in which inequality or inequity can be exacerbated. I hope my work initiates scholarly conversations about these employees as I discuss the role of business research and education in either reproducing or reducing the moralization of intrinsic motivation.

This dissertation proceeds in three steps. In this chapter, I define intrinsic motivation and explain its relationships to other, related concepts as starting assumptions. In Chapter 2, I build a theoretical model explaining the moralization of intrinsic motivation and its effects. I conceptualize how the valuation of intrinsic motivation at three levels—society, organization, and interpersonal relationships—leads to the moralization of intrinsic motivation and its subsequent behavioral outcomes. In Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, I test two empirical outcomes predicted by the theoretical model: Employees' selective prosociality and their exaggeration of intrinsic motivation. Finally, I discuss my model's contributions to the literature and practice and conclude with suggestions for future research.

## 1.1 Definitions and Beginning Assumptions

I define intrinsic motivation broadly so that the definition captures the different aspects of intrinsic motivation suggested in previous literature. At its core, intrinsic motivation refers to the willingness of employees to engage in their work autonomously because they find the work itself satisfying (Amabile et al., 1994; Deci & Ryan, 1985). Two underlying reasons for this satisfaction stand out in the literature. Classical theories on intrinsic motivation such as self-determination theory (SDT) suggest that innate curiosity and a desire to learn guide employees' engagement (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Gagné & Deci, 2005). Other theoretical perspectives such as goal theory consider the pure joy and pleasure that employees feel at work as the core elements of intrinsic motivation (Touré-Tillery & Fishbach, 2014). Indeed, a study found that both employees' desires to learn through challenges at work and the pleasure they derive from their work are two distinct factors of intrinsic motivation (Amabile et al., 1994). Following this approach, I define intrinsic motivation as employees' autonomous doing of the work for its inherent satisfaction, where such satisfaction derives from the learning and/or pleasure that the work offers.

I distinguish intrinsic motivation from passion and calling, two closely related yet different constructs. Passion is defined as “a strong inclination toward an activity that people like, that they find important, and in which they invest time and energy” (Vallerand et al., 2003, p. 756). Passion and intrinsic motivation have commonalities, as both lead to positive emotions at work. However, intrinsic motivation also involves cognitive attributions of why employees work (i.e., “I think I am working because I like it”), whereas passion is more about immediate, strong emotions—even negative ones—that employees feel about their work (Jachimowicz, Wihler, Bailey, & Galinsky, 2018), as they internalize the work as part of their identity



(Vallerand et al., 2003). I also distinguish intrinsic motivation from calling. Neoclassical calling refers to the sense of fulfillment that employees experience as they perform work for which they are destined to use their talents (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009; Thompson & Bunderson, 2019). A modern view of calling does not involve religious connections but instead emphasizes the social impacts and social values of the job (Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin, & Schwartz, 1997). Both calling and intrinsic motivation involve employees' strong personal connections to their work. However, the sources of such connections vary. Calling stems from a spiritual source, as employees believe that their work has special meaning, either spiritual meaning or perhaps a social impact on others. However, intrinsic motivation has a personal focus, as it relates to employees' desires for and experiences of their own growth or pleasure. Calling may in fact involve a sense of obligation, and employees with a calling may not always find their work enjoyable (Thompson & Bunderson, 2019; Wrzesniewski et al., 1997).

The motivation literature often discusses intrinsic motivation in relation to two other types of motivation: extrinsic and prosocial. Extrinsic motivation refers to employees' performing work for outcomes separate from the work itself. Most individuals experience both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and both jointly predict employees' work performance (Cerasoli et al., 2014). Lay theories (e.g., individual themselves), however, often consider these two types of motivation to be incompatible (Derfler-Rozin & Pitesa, 2020; Heath, 1999). Prosocial motivation refers to performing work in order to make a positive impact on the beneficiaries of that work (Grant, 2008). Prosocial motivation often correlates with intrinsic motivation, and they tend to boost each other's impact on positive work outcomes (Grant, 2008; Grant & Berry, 2011). However, prosocial motivation is other-oriented in a sense that it involves

employees' interpersonal relationships with the beneficiaries of their work, while intrinsic motivation is self-oriented as it focuses on employees' own personal satisfaction at work.

I theorize the moralization of intrinsic motivation in this paper, but I acknowledge the importance of these other motivation types. Specifically, I expect that the strength of these can increase or decrease employees' perceptions of intrinsic motivation. Employees' intrinsic motivation suggests that they are working for internal causes (i.e., their own growth and pleasure). Similarly, calling and passion provide evidence that they work for reasons internal to the employees. In contrast, employees' extrinsic motivation suggests that they work for external causes such as monetary rewards. Drawing on attribution theory (Kelley, 1973), I argue that external causes would decrease employees' perception of intrinsic motivation (i.e., an internal attribution of employees' motivation), while internal causes would increase it. For example, perception of calling would increase perceived intrinsic motivation (e.g., "She clearly has a calling for her work; she must love it."), while perception of extrinsic motivation decreases it (Derfler-Rozin & Pitesa, 2020). In general, I believe that the salience of intrinsic motivation in employees' overall motivational profile matters. I do not theorize the effects of this motivational profile directly in the paper, but I address how these other types of motivation might affect the moralization of intrinsic motivation or become moralized themselves in the general discussion.

## **1.2 Intrinsic Motivation: Historical and Recent Findings**

Employees' intrinsic motivation leads to many desirable work attitudes and outcomes. Because employees with strong intrinsic motivation feel a natural pull toward their work (Shin & Grant, 2019), they show stronger commitment and engagement (Babakus et al., 2008; Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2010). Such attitudes not only lead to positive work outcomes such as high performance (Cerasoli et al., 2014; Erez et al., 1990; Grant, 2008) and creativity (Amabile, 1985, 1998; Grant

& Berry, 2011) but also increase extra-role helping (Finkelstein, 2011; Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006) and prosocial action toward the beneficiaries of the work (Grant, 2008). Intrinsic motivation further reduces negative work outcomes such as turnover intention (Galletta, Portoghese, & Battistelli, 2011). Taking together these findings, employees' intrinsic motivation benefits both the employees who have it and the organizations for which they work.

Perhaps because of these positive work outcomes, intrinsically motivated employees receive favorable evaluations in organizations. Employees perceive their intrinsically motivated co-workers as "admirable, good, or noble" (Heath, 1999). Managers' evaluations of their subordinates are positively associated with their perceptions of the latter's intrinsic motivation (DeVoe & Iyengar, 2004). In the context of hiring, managers often assess job candidates based on their intrinsic motivation: job candidates who express stronger intrinsic motivation are perceived as better equipped for the positions they apply to (Woolley & Fishbach, 2018) and as potentially more dedicated to their work (Derfler-Rozin & Pitesa, 2020; Kim et al., 2020). In a range of work contexts from performance evaluations to hiring, therefore, intrinsic motivation is associated with not only positive individual characteristics but also favorable interpersonal evaluations.

However, several recent studies report negative interpersonal consequences of intrinsic motivation mainly in relation to external rewards. Lay beliefs consider intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation, especially desires for money, to be negatively correlated (Derfler-Rozin & Pitesa, 2020; Heath, 1999). Because of these lay beliefs, people are reluctant to pay employees who declare to like their work because these employees are not supposed to pursue monetary rewards (Kim et al., 2020). On the other hand, managers punish employees perceived as having extrinsic motivation because it signals a lack of intrinsic motivation and commitment associated

with it (Derfler-Rozin & Pitesa, 2020). In extreme cases, employees are forced to hide their extrinsic motivation and to show intrinsic motivation in order to receive favorable evaluations. For example, Dewey (2011) reports an example of an ova donor who was requested to hide her true motivation to sell her eggs to repay her debt and instead was asked to emphasize her genuine interest in undergoing a painful medical procedure to extract her eggs in order to help other women have a baby (Dewey, 2011). These studies illustrate that the positive emphasis on intrinsic motivation may lead to exploitation of intrinsically motivated employees and pressure those who lack intrinsic motivation to show it.

These interpersonal benefits and costs of intrinsic motivation provide initial evidence that intrinsic motivation signals superior morality. Individuals evaluate intrinsically motivated employees favorably believing that these employees will not just deliver high performance but also show exemplary work attitudes such as strong commitment, engagement, and devotion. Further, lay theories on the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation include the belief that these employees will not chase external rewards such as money and fame in showing such devotion—if they do, they are not *truly* intrinsically motivated (Derfler-Rozin and Pitesa, 2020). Individuals thus expect intrinsically motivated employees to exhibit a strong work ethic (i.e., do the right thing), and to eschew material, mundane, and often taboo external rewards (i.e., the wrong thing).

### **1.3 Summary**

In this chapter, I defined intrinsic motivation and situated my dissertation in the broad literature of motivation, passion, and calling. I also summarized historical and recent findings about the positive work outcomes of intrinsic motivation and its valuation in the current social contexts. In the next chapter, I build a theoretical framework that explains how employees come

to associate intrinsic motivation with morality, a phenomenon I call *the moralization of intrinsic motivation*. I then describe how this moralization shapes employees' value judgments and behaviors toward others and themselves.

## Chapter 2 Theoretical Model Development

### 2.1 Moralization

Moralization is a process whereby individuals come to believe something that was once considered a personal choice or preference to be a value to be upheld (Rozin, 1999). Typical examples of moralized behaviors/attitudes are cigarette smoking and veganism (Greenebaum, 2012; Rozin, 1999; Rozin, Markwith, & Stoess, 1997). When cigarette smoking is not moralized, it remains a personal preference: just like people who like coffee drink it, people who like cigarettes smoke them. However, once cigarette smoking is moralized, people begin making value judgments and think that it is bad and wrong to smoke cigarettes. In a similar fashion, individuals who moralize a vegan way of eating consider it the right thing to do. They think that “veganism is more than a diet; it is a philosophy and ethic” (Greenebaum, 2012, p. 129). Recently, the world has undergone the large-scale moralization of mask-wearing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Before the pandemic, wearing masks was optional for healthy individuals. Since the pandemic, however, it has become a moral issue; those who wear masks are praised for keeping others in the community safe; those who do not are reprimanded for being selfish and irresponsible.

Individuals moralize a behavior or an attitude through two distinct routes: cognitive and affective. Cognitively, they apply their pre-existing moral principles to a new issue in order to make moral judgments about it (Rozin, 1999; Rozin, Lowery, Imada, & Haidt, 1999; Shweder, Much, Mahapatra, & Park, 1997). When they encounter a behavior or attitude that is morally

questionable to them, it evokes their previous beliefs about what is good and what is bad (i.e., their moral principles). They then moralize the behavior or attitude as they incorporate it into their moral principles (Rozin, 1999). For example, imagine a person who believes that harming is immoral. When the person watches a video explaining how meat-eating induces various forms of animal suffering, it evokes her moral principle (i.e., meat-eating harms animals). Then she moralizes meat-eating by incorporating it as a new belief under her moral principle (i.e., meat-eating is immoral because it harms animals).

Research shows that individuals rely on six major moral principles, although their relative emphasis may vary (Graham et al., 2013; Haidt, 2012). These moral principles, or moral foundations, include (a) caring: taking care of others, (b) fairness: being fair and not deceiving others in order to obtain desired outcomes, (c) loyalty: showing loyalty to one's social group, (d) authority: adhering to those with legitimate authority (e.g., law courts, police departments, and supervisors in organizations), (e) sanctity: living up to sanctified values and practices, and (f) liberty: making liberal decisions (Graham et al., 2013; Haidt, 2012; Rozin et al., 1999; Shweder et al., 1997). Not all individuals use all six moral principles, and individuals can prioritize one principle over another. For example, individuals' political standings affect which principles they emphasize the most; liberals place a strong emphasis on caring and fairness, whereas conservatives tend to use all moral foundations equally (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009). When a behavior or attitude evokes moral principle(s) individuals consider as important, individuals moralize the behavior or attitude cognitively by incorporating it as part of their moral principle.

Although the cognitive route of moralization has received much scholarly attention, moralization is also an affective and intuitive process (Haidt, 2001; Wisneski & Skitka, 2017). That is, individuals often *know* immediately whether a behavior or attitude is good or bad, and

cognition occurs afterward as they try to explain how they knew that it was moral or immoral (Haidt, 2001). This intuitive process of moralization is called the affective route because emotions play a key role in their initial responses (Feinberg, Kovacheff, Teper, & Inbar, 2019; Wisneski & Skitka, 2017). Research on moral shock, for example, found that individuals quickly moralize something that evokes disgust, such as abortion after watching images of aborted fetuses (Wisneski & Skitka, 2017) or meat-eating after being exposed to animal slaughter videos (Feinberg et al., 2019). On the other hand, they also moralize what they feel positively about. During the 2012 election, those who felt more enthusiastic about their preferred political party increasingly considered the party to be moral (Brandt, Wisneski, & Skitka, 2015).

Moralization theory is effective in explaining why employees care about the intrinsic motivation of others as they moralize it. Previous theories on work motivation depicted intrinsic motivation as a personal trait (Amabile et al., 1994) or as the relationship between a person and their work (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Such descriptions do not involve others—some employees choose to work for what they like; others may separate their work from what brings them pleasure. When employees moralize intrinsic motivation, however, it becomes not only an intrapersonal issue but also an interpersonal one as having intrinsic motivation becomes their moral standard. They try to adhere to this standard whenever possible and check whether others are also doing so.

Below I describe how the valuation of intrinsic motivation in employees' social contexts leads to their moralization of intrinsic motivation by evoking their cognitive and affective responses.



## 2.2 The Valuation of Intrinsic Motivation in Social Contexts and Moralization

Employees are situated in social contexts where intrinsic motivation at work is valued to varying degrees. For example, adages that support the idea of loving the work (e.g., “If you do what you love, you will never work a day in your life.”) are readily available in some societal contexts but not in others. Cultures that are more individualistic support individuals’ pursuit of their own goals and rights in life domains, while collectivistic cultures value those of groups (Hofstede, 1980, 2011). Similarly, some organizations emphasize intrinsic motivation in their cultural statements and prefer to hire intrinsically motivated job candidates (e.g., “curiosity” and “passion” show up in the top 10 values in Netflix’s cultural statement<sup>1</sup>), whereas others may not care about employees’ intrinsic motivation as much. In interpersonal relationships, employees regularly interact with colleagues or customers who may or may not value intrinsic motivation. The valuation of intrinsic motivation in employees’ social contexts (or lack thereof) thus varies.

I distinguish the positive valuation of intrinsic motivation on three levels—societal, organizational, and interpersonal—and theorize how the moral valuation at each level evokes employees’ moral principles and/or emotions. First, I conceptualize that the society-level valuation originates in the cultures, religions, and ideologies that are predominant in a society telling members what is considered important and sanctified in a cultural group (e.g., nation). These sources may emphasize intrinsic motivation directly or support its elements such as autonomy, personal growth, or pleasure at work. Some examples of the society-level valuation of intrinsic motivation are cultural values such as individualism versus collectivism, cultural looseness versus tightness (Gelfand et al., 2011), and self-expressionist versus survivalist

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<sup>1</sup> <https://jobs.netflix.com/culture>. At the end of the statement, they cite Antoine de Saint-Exupéry to say: “If you want to build a ship, don’t drum up the people to gather wood, divide the work, and give orders. Instead, teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea.”

cultures (Inglehart & Norris, 2003). Individualism stresses individuals' goals and rights, while its opposite, collectivism, values the goals and rights of groups. Compared with collectivistic cultures, individualistic cultures are thus more likely to support autonomous job selection and engagement of individuals, rather than the government, family members, or peers selecting jobs for individuals. This idea aligns with the autonomy aspect of intrinsic motivation.

A similar logic applies to other cultural characteristics. Tight cultures such as Singapore and Korea have clearly defined social norms that constrain individuals' behaviors in many work contexts such as job interview (Gelfand et al., 2011). In contrast, loose cultures such as the United States and Italy allow room for individuals to flexibly interpret social norms and exercise their own preference. Therefore, loose cultures are more likely to support individuals' working for personal preference than tight cultures do. Similarly, survivalist cultures such as African-Islamic cultures put an emphasis on economic and physical safety over self-expression and quality of life, whereas self-expressionist cultures such as Protestant Europe value environmental protection and tolerance of foreigners, gender equality, and diverse sexual orientations (Haerper et al., 2020; Inglehart & Norris, 2003). Self-expressionist cultures would thus support individuals' work as a means of self-expression even when it goes against conventional stereotypes. In contrast, going against such stereotypes can be a serious violation of norms in survivalist cultures.

At the organization level, leaders have incentives to encourage their followers toward intrinsic motivation. Managerial discourse emphasizes the value of intrinsic motivation because intrinsically motivated employees increase productivity (e.g., high performance and creativity) and reduce costs (e.g., turnover) (Derfler-Rozin & Pitesa, 2020). Leaders frequently make public

statements that acknowledge the value of intrinsic motivation<sup>2</sup>. Leaders can also endorse intrinsic motivation indirectly by focusing on specific aspects of intrinsic motivation. For example, they may emphasize intrinsic motivation as a source of autonomy, so that their followers would engage in their work even when the leaders cannot monitor the followers. Academia is a good example of a profession that values autonomy and intrinsic motivation as a source of autonomous engagement in research. Pleasure is another aspect of intrinsic motivation that organizations often reward. Leaders may endorse intrinsic motivation to boost positive emotions at work because such emotions are contagious for co-workers (Barsade, 2002) and customers (Barger & Grandey, 2006; Hennig-Thurau, Groth, Paul, & Gremier, 2006; Pugh, 2001), especially when they are genuine (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2006). The organization-level valuation of intrinsic motivation thus sets up reward systems or an organizational culture/climate that endorses intrinsic motivation.

Finally, employees may interact with other individuals who value intrinsic motivation at the interpersonal level. Such individuals may directly promote intrinsic motivation by emphasizing how it improves their (or others') work experiences, or they may attribute their (or others') positive work attitudes or behaviors to intrinsic motivation. For example, many books, movies, podcasts, and graduation speeches list intrinsic motivation as a source of career success. Consider these quotes from Steve Jobs' Stanford graduation speech, as he described what drove his early success with Apple, "I was lucky — I found what I loved to do early in life," and as he explained what motivated him to found NeXT after he left Apple, "I was a very public failure, and I even thought about running away from the valley. But something slowly began to dawn on

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<sup>2</sup> E.g., "Pursuing your passions makes you more interesting, and interesting people are enchanting" (Guy Kawasaki, an American venture capitalist); "Our goal is to provide our valued partners with learning opportunities to develop skills, further careers and help partners achieve their personal and professional goals. As a partner (employee) who is curious, collaborative and a continuous learner, you'll have limitless opportunities to make an impact and thrive, all while becoming your personal best and being recognized for it." (Starbucks Culture and Values Statement)

me — I still loved what I did.” On the other hand, individuals also endorse intrinsic motivation by emphasizing how its absence leads to negative work experiences and performance. Because intrinsic motivation is closely associated with employees’ satisfaction at work, employees with low intrinsic motivation likely report finding their job relatively unsatisfactory. Indeed, it is a common cliché for individuals to leave their (often well-paying) job to pursue their passion where they presumably will be intrinsically motivated. Another popular quote from Steve Jobs states: “I have looked in the mirror every morning and asked myself: ‘If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?’ And whenever the answer has been ‘No’ for too many days in a row, I know I need to change something.”

The societal, organizational, and interpersonal valuation of intrinsic motivation guides the moralization of intrinsic motivation through both cognitive and affective routes. Cognitively, this valuation speaks to employees who previously considered living up to the sanctified values in their social contexts as important. These employees come to moralize intrinsic motivation because they believe that having intrinsic motivation preserves important values in their social contexts. Similarly, the valuation of intrinsic motivation can come about because employees value authority, loyalty, and interpersonal relationships in general. These employees would think that they can show commitment to their cultural groups, leaders, and close others by having and displaying intrinsic motivation to show consistency with the purported values. Affectively, pursuing values upheld by the social context could elicit positive emotional responses such as esteem and pride. Positive stories about intrinsically motivated employees could induce admiration and elevation. If employees already have high levels of intrinsic motivation, existing tangible and intangible rewards for having intrinsic motivation could further boost their positive affect. Therefore, the alignment between employees’ moral principles and their social contexts

valuing intrinsic motivation, as well as the positive emotion employees feel about it, guides its moralization.

Valuations of intrinsic motivation at the society, organizational, and interpersonal levels could be mutually reinforcing. Societal-level valuation provides a broad context for leaders to value intrinsic motivation at the organizational level. A CEO, for example, may adopt the society-level valuation of intrinsic motivation and create compensation systems that reward it. Likewise, societal- and organizational-level valuation can serve as a toolkit for employees to make sense out of their worlds at the interpersonal level (Swidler, 1986). For example, the valuation of intrinsic motivation in the society and organizations would increase the availability of interpersonal anecdotes that promote intrinsic motivation. On the other hand, interpersonal-level valuation of intrinsic motivation can reproduce and strengthen organization- and society-level valuations. Positive anecdotes about intrinsic motivation reproduced in interpersonal dialogues sustain organizational policies and religious beliefs that endorse intrinsic motivation. Individuals may further spread their valuation of intrinsic motivation across organizational and national boundaries as they talk to others in different cultural groups, which could increase the valuation of intrinsic motivation in those groups. This self-reinforcing cycle of valuation explains why the moralization of intrinsic motivation would spread rapidly and broadly even though the extent to which individuals put an emphasis on different moral values varies.

**Proposition 1.** The valuation of intrinsic motivation in employees' social contexts (i.e., the society, organizations, and interpersonal relationships) increases their moralization of intrinsic motivation.

### **2.3 The Role of Individual-Level Intrinsic Motivation**

I further suggest that employees' own intrinsic motivation affects their moralization of intrinsic motivation in two ways. First, employees with stronger intrinsic motivation are more

likely to moralize it because they experience its positive impacts on work attitudes and outcomes directly. Similar to the interpersonal valuation of intrinsic motivation, these positive experiences affect employees' cognitive and affective responses to intrinsic motivation. For example, employees who go the extra mile at work because they like it would associate intrinsic motivation with loyalty; employees who help their co-workers because of their intrinsic motivation would associate it with caring. Affectively, intrinsically motivated employees likely feel positive emotions at work, such as enjoyment coming from doing what they like or satisfaction coming from achieving personal growth. The affective route of moralization suggests that these positive emotions can be a source of moralization (Brandt et al., 2015; Haidt, 2001). That is, employees consider what brings them positive feelings—their intrinsic motivation—a good thing and associate it with morality.

Second, employees' own intrinsic motivation can strengthen or attenuate the impact of the valuation of intrinsic motivation in their social contexts. One critical boundary condition of moralization is whether individuals feel they must change themselves to show a behavior or attitude that is becoming moralized (Feinberg et al., 2019; Steele, 1988). Moralization creates a new standard whereby what was once neutral now has a value judgment of goodness or badness associated with it. When individuals cannot adhere to the new moral standard without changing their original behavior or attitude, they feel a significant threat as they become dissatisfied with their current self. Moreover, because the new standard created by moralization challenges their perceptions of themselves as moral (Allison, Messick, & Goethals, 1989; Taylor & Brown, 1988), they experience cognitive dissonance—that is, inconsistency between their self-perceptions (Festinger, 1957). To reduce this cognitive dissonance, most individuals choose to

rationalize their choice, devising reasons why they cannot meet the moral standard or why it is not worth adhering to (Feinberg et al., 2019; Steele, 1988).

Similarly, the valuation of intrinsic motivation in employees' social contexts will impact their moralization of intrinsic motivation more strongly when their own intrinsic motivation is higher. The moralization of intrinsic motivation sets up a new standard that employees should follow in their work. When employees already have high intrinsic motivation, they will have little difficulty moralizing intrinsic motivation and adopting the new standard because they can keep doing what they have been doing. These employees would feel like they are successful in the eyes of their society, which would fuel positive emotions such as pride. Thus, they will moralize intrinsic motivation more when it is valued more in their social contexts.

Employees with low intrinsic motivation, by contrast, will have difficulty moralizing intrinsic motivation even when it is highly valued in their social contexts. The new standard set by the moralization—that those who like their work are good—creates a gap between employees' current and ideal selves based on their moral standard. This gap leads to cognitive dissonance where employees would like to consider themselves good but cannot do so without forcing themselves to enjoy their (unenjoyable) work. The more that employees observe the valuation of intrinsic motivation in their social contexts, the more their moral principles and emotions are evoked, and the stronger their cognitive dissonance. To resolve this dissonance, employees may resist the moralization and rationalize their lack of intrinsic motivation. For example, they may conclude that disliking the work is just fine because they can find pleasure in other aspects of their life.

**Proposition 2.** Employees' level of intrinsic motivation increases their moralization of intrinsic motivation.

**Proposition 3.** Employees' level of intrinsic motivation strengthens the positive impact of the valuation of intrinsic motivation in their social contexts on their moralization of intrinsic motivation.

## **2.4 Behavioral Consequences of the Moralization of Intrinsic Motivation**

Moralization affects the behaviors of individuals by establishing moral standards they apply to themselves and others (Darley, 2009; Skitka, Bauman, & Sargis, 2005). For example, compared with those who choose veganism for health or environmental concerns, vegans who moralize it have stricter standards for practicing it (Greenebaum, 2012). They use the standards to evaluate themselves and others, where their value judgments become extremely positive when the standards are met and too harsh when not (Greenebaum, 2012; Skitka & Mullen, 2002). In organizational contexts, ethical leaders—leaders who demonstrate “normatively appropriate conduct” (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005)—feel more obliged to keep acting morally than leaders who do not emphasize ethics (De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2008). Further, ethical leaders, because of their beliefs, develop reward-and-punishment systems to increase the moral behaviors of their followers (Stouten, van Dijke, Mayer, De Cremer, & Euwema, 2013). These examples suggest that moralization turns a personal issue into both an intrapersonal and an interpersonal one, as individuals care about not just their own behaviors and attitudes but also those of others.

In the context of intrinsic motivation as well, the moralization of intrinsic motivation sets up a moral standard that employees apply to others and to themselves. For employees who do not moralize intrinsic motivation, enjoying work is a personal preference, like enjoying coffee. They will not be interested in whether someone has intrinsic motivation because they think that it does not give meaningful information about that person. For employees who moralize intrinsic motivation, by contrast, having intrinsic motivation becomes a moral standard and a source of value judgments. They will care about the intrinsic motivation of others and themselves because



it is a signal of morality. For them, having intrinsic motivation is a sign of superior morality and hence leads to positive value judgments, whereas lacking intrinsic motivation signals a lack of morality.

Below, I elaborate on the behavioral consequences of employees' value judgments following their moralization of intrinsic motivation. I first describe how employees praise and punish others depending on such others' intrinsic motivation, and then I illustrate how employees reward and sanction themselves for having or lacking intrinsic motivation.

#### ***2.4.1 Interpersonal Outcomes***

When employees moralize intrinsic motivation, they believe that others must have intrinsic motivation and take steps to reward others who have intrinsic motivation and punish others who do not. Individuals' moral judgments are distinguished from nonmoral attitudes because individuals believe their moral standards are universal and that all others should adhere to the same standard (Skitka, 2010). When individuals perceive that others adhere to their moral standard, they try to reward them, for example by increasing collaboration (Leach, Ellemers, & Barreto, 2007) and by providing financial rewards (Turillo, Folger, Lavelle, Umphress, & Gee, 2002). Likewise, employees who moralize intrinsic motivation believe that others should moralize intrinsic motivation as well and follow the same moral standard. Employees then try to reward others who have intrinsic motivation and meet their moral standard.

Employees who moralize intrinsic motivation may attempt to reward intrinsically motivated others by giving them positive feedback and performance appraisal. Despite the prevalent beliefs in meritocracy suggesting that performance evaluations should depend solely on objective performance, such evaluations are often subjective (Alexander & Wilkins, 1982) and depend on the likeability of those being evaluated (Lefkowitz, 2000; Sandy J. Wayne &

Ferris, 1990). When employees moralize intrinsic motivation, the likability of those who have it will increase because they will be perceived as moral and thus as deserving of rewards.

Likability will in turn increase the positive feedback employees give to their coworkers and subordinates.

Literatures on leader-member exchange (LMX) and ethical leadership further support the idea that leaders who moralize intrinsic motivation will favor intrinsically motivated subordinates. Subordinates are not an undifferentiated mass to most supervisors, but rather supervisors develop an ingroup and outgroup, with the ingroup enjoying their favor (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). When supervisors moralize intrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation can be one criterion to divide an ingroup and outgroup, where subordinates in the ingroup (e.g., those who are intrinsically motivated) receive favorable feedback. Further, research on ethical leadership suggests that supervisors often develop reward systems to increase moral behaviors of their subordinates (Stouten et al., 2013). When supervisors moralize intrinsic motivation, they may thus take into account subordinates' intrinsic motivation in formal reward systems such as performance appraisal.

Employees will also reward intrinsically motivated others by showing cooperativeness and the willingness to collaborate. Employees need to establish relationships with other employees in order to collaborate because successful collaborations often involve more than simple exchanges of work materials but rather social exchanges of favors and effort that diffuse and mature over time (Blau, 1964). For example, building an effective team requires much informal relationship building such as mentoring and coaching, generating a sense of community, and encouraging knowledge sharing among employees (Gratton & Erickson, 2007). Because individuals are more willing to connect and build relationships with moral others (Leach

et al., 2007), employees who moralize intrinsic motivation will prefer to cooperate with intrinsically motivated—and moral—others. This cooperativeness can take multiple forms at work, both in terms of formal work activities (e.g., helping, information sharing) and informal interactions (e.g., smiling, talking off-line).

When employees moralize intrinsic motivation, they may not only reward intrinsically motivated others but also punish those who lack intrinsic motivation. The fact that these employees favor intrinsically motivated others already puts those who lack intrinsic motivation at a relative disadvantage. However, these employees may take further steps and attempt to punish the lack of intrinsic motivation as it suggests lack of morality. Literature on moral conviction suggests that individuals make negative judgments on others who fail to meet their moral standard, regardless of the underlying reasons for why they failed to meet it (Skitka et al., 2005). Individuals then punish immoral others by setting up regulations and laws (Darley, 2009; Stouten et al., 2013) or avoiding social interactions with them (Rozin, 1999; Skitka et al., 2005). Therefore, employees who moralize intrinsic motivation may actively punish those who lack intrinsic motivation by refusing to collaborate or taking opportunities away from them.

**Proposition 4.** Employees' moralization of intrinsic motivation increases their rewards (punishments) toward others having higher (lower) levels of intrinsic motivation.

#### ***2.4.2 Individual Outcomes***

Employees who moralize intrinsic motivation will strive to maintain high levels of intrinsic motivation themselves and feel stressed when they cannot do so. When individuals set up a moral standard, meeting that standard becomes important to maintaining their positive self-concept in general and self-integrity, which refers to individuals' perceptions of themselves as moral in particular (Steele, 1988; Stone, Cooper, Wiegand, & Aronson, 1997). When individuals can meet the moral standard, their self-integrity increases and they feel proud of themselves. But

when they fail to adhere to their moral standard despite their efforts, the sense of failure poses a significant threat to their self-integrity, creating a motivation to reaffirm it (Steele, 1988). In a similar fashion, having intrinsic motivation becomes an important part of employees' self-integrity when they moralize intrinsic motivation. When they perceive their intrinsic motivation as strong enough, their self-integrity will increase; when they fail to maintain high levels of intrinsic motivation, their self-integrity will decrease, and they will try to find ways to recover it.

When employees moralize intrinsic motivation, maintaining high levels of intrinsic motivation will boost their emotions and engagement at work. Adhering to one's own moral standards gives individuals specific types of positive emotions referred to as moral emotions, especially pride (Bagozzi, 2020). Therefore, while intrinsically motivated employees feel positively at work in general because they enjoy their work, having intrinsic motivation and moralizing it will give an extra boost to their positive emotions. To keep feeling these positive emotions and boost to their self-integrity, employees will keep engaging in their work. Indeed, intrinsically motivated employees often focus on tasks they can enjoy to the extent that they neglect other required tasks (Shin & Grant, 2019).

When employees who moralize intrinsic motivation fail to have it at work, on the other hand, they will likely experience self-induced burnout. Workplace burnout has three underlying components: a sense of inefficacy, emotional exhaustion, and cynicism (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). When employees lack intrinsic motivation and thus cannot meet their own moral standard, they experience a sense of inefficacy because they think they cannot achieve something they value (Steele, 1988). Failing to meet a moral standard also evokes negative emotions toward the self, such as shame, guilt, and embarrassment (Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek, 2007). When this emotional strain continues, it makes employees emotionally exhausted at work. Finally, as

employees continue doing work that is not only uninteresting but also drains their self-integrity, they will feel a strong need to detach themselves from that work, which increases their cynicism (Maslach et al., 2001).

When employees moralize their intrinsic motivation but continue to experience low levels of it, they may disengage in the work or leave it entirely. Their self-integrity continues to decrease when they continue performing work they cannot enjoy and thus fail to meet their moral standards. By detaching themselves from the work physically (through turnover) or mentally (through disengagement), they can separate themselves from the source of negative self-integrity and subsequent stress. Further, such detachment may help employees recover their damaged self-integrity. Although they can reaffirm their self-integrity by increasing their intrinsic motivation, enjoying work they already find uninteresting may not be feasible. Instead, they might leave their work to spend time finding or doing what they like, which likely increases their self-integrity. Indeed, individuals frequently engage in moral actions in other domains in order to increase their overall self-integrity when they cannot maintain it in one domain (Sherman et al., 2009; Steele, 1988).

**Proposition 5.** Employees' moralization of intrinsic motivation increases their rewards (punishments) toward the self having higher (lower) levels of intrinsic motivation.

## **2.5 The exaggeration of intrinsic motivation and moralization cycle**

The moralization of intrinsic motivation creates an impression management motives as well. That is, as employees moralize intrinsic motivation and/or realize the behavioral consequences of such moralization, they may exaggerate their intrinsic motivation to others. Because individuals tend to believe their moral standards to be universal (Skitka, 2010), employees who moralize intrinsic motivation will expect others to reward them for intrinsic motivation and punish its lack. Even employees who do not moralize intrinsic motivation may

acknowledge that some others associate it with superior morality as they interact with them and thus pretend to have it. Thus, employees who already have intrinsic motivation would further exaggerate their intrinsic motivation in order to prove their intrinsic motivation to others and to obtain rewards; employees who do not have strong intrinsic motivation could fake it to avoid being punished.

Employees have incentives to exaggerate their intrinsic motivation for several reasons. First, Individuals rely on visible cues to attribute others' motivation, which do not always provide accurate information (Heath, 1999). Because intrinsic motivation is not directly visible, employees may feel incited to display more visible cues (e.g., showing positive emotions at work) to manipulate others' perceptions of their intrinsic motivation. Second, exaggerating intrinsic motivation is unrelated to objective qualifications. Employees can simply mention how much they enjoy their work in order to show high levels of intrinsic motivation. For example, a job candidate can simply write that he is very interested in the position in his resume, even though he has no interest at all. Finally, employees do not always need to *fake* their intrinsic motivation to exaggerate it. Lying to others is risky because it can backfire when others find out. Work motivation, however, exists at multiple levels, from global (personality) to life context (domain) to situational (state) (Vallerand, 1997). Therefore, instead of lying about their intrinsic motivation, employees can talk about the parts of their work they do like and avoid mentioning the parts they dislike in order to appear more intrinsically motivated.

Employees' exaggeration of intrinsic motivation could create a *moralization cycle*, as it further provides evidence of the valuation of intrinsic motivation in social contexts. When more employees show intrinsic motivation (whether true or not), more examples of employees receiving rewards for intrinsic motivation will be available. These examples show the society-

and organization-level valuation of intrinsic motivation. At the interpersonal level, employees may tell others how their (fake) displays of intrinsic motivation led to success. These positive anecdotes about intrinsic motivation will be sources of interpersonal valuation of intrinsic motivation. Thus, employees' exaggeration of intrinsic motivation accelerates the moralization of intrinsic motivation in their cultural groups.

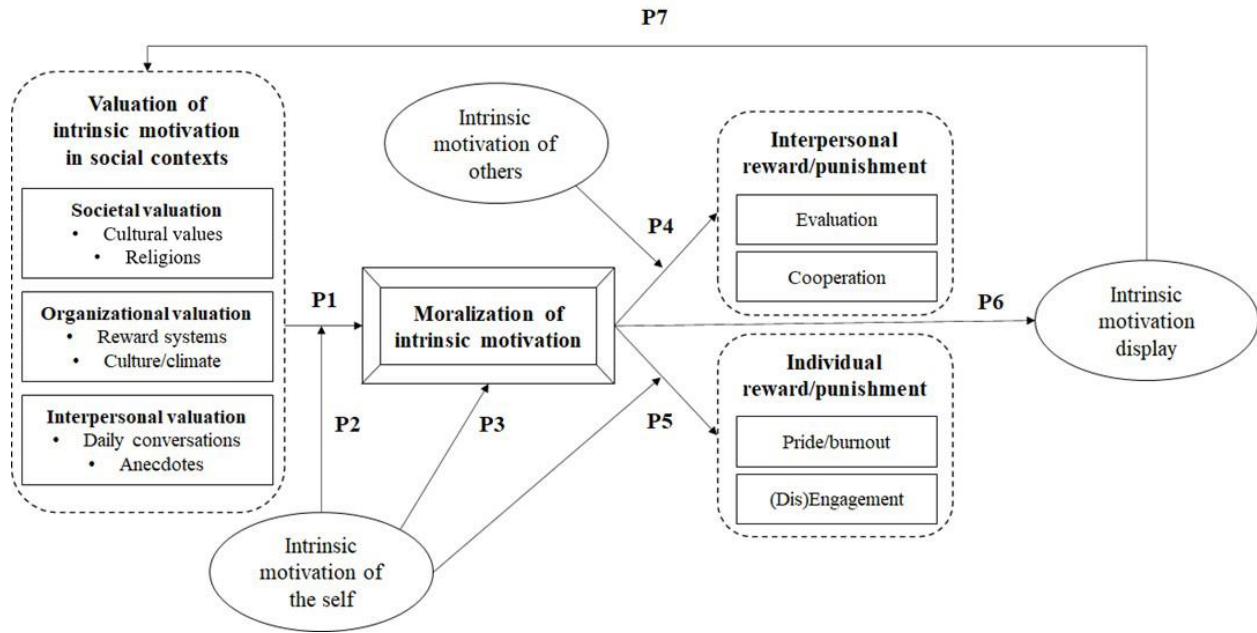
**Proposition 6.** Employees' moralization of intrinsic motivation increases their exaggeration of intrinsic motivation.

**Proposition 7.** Employees' exaggeration of intrinsic motivation increases the valuation of intrinsic motivation in the social contexts.

## **2.6 Summary**

At the core of this chapter is the moralization of intrinsic motivation. I presented a theoretical framework to explain how the valuation of intrinsic motivation at the societal, organizational, and interpersonal levels makes employees associate it with morality. I then discussed the affective and behavioral outcomes of employees' moralization of intrinsic motivation toward others and themselves. See Figure 2-1 for the full theoretical model. My theoretical model provides fresh and useful insights on intrinsic motivation as it advances scholarly conversations on the negative social consequences of intrinsic motivation through moralization.

Figure 2-1. Theoretical Model of the Moralization of Intrinsic Motivation





## Chapter 3 Intrinsic Motivation and Selective Prosociality in Teams<sup>3</sup>

### 3.1 Purpose of the Study

A wealth of prior research has evidenced the robust link between intrinsic motivation and positive work outcomes. Intrinsically motivated employees find the work itself more satisfactory (Amabile, Hill, Hennessey, & Tighe, 1994; Deci, 1975; Gagné & Deci, 2005) and a goal in and of itself (Touré-Tillery & Fishbach, 2014). Employees with higher intrinsic motivation are more engaged in their work (Babakus, Yavas, & Karatepe, 2008) and more persistent than employees who experience lower intrinsic motivation (Grant, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2000). A number of studies further show that intrinsically motivated employees are creative thinkers (Amabile, 1985; 1998) and high performers (Erez, Gopher, & Arzi, 1990; Menges, Tussing, Wihler, & Grant, 2017; Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006; Shin & Grant, 2019). In sum, these studies highlight the manifold ways in which intrinsically motivated employees attain more favorable work-related outcomes.

One positive outcome of intrinsic motivation that has received much scholarly attention is employees' prosociality. Because intrinsically motivated employees work for their own satisfaction and growth, they likely have an enhanced desire to achieve goals outside of organizational requirements (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006). Thus, employees with higher intrinsic motivation perform more extra-role citizenship behaviors as they strive to go above and beyond

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<sup>3</sup> Co-authored with Julia Lee Cunningham (University of Michigan) and Jon M. Jachimowicz (Harvard Business School). Student is the first author and wrote the manuscript and ran the analyses.

what is required (Finkelstein, 2011; Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006). Moreover, employees with strong desires to benefit others outside their work boundaries are more persistent and exhibit higher performance when they also have higher intrinsic motivation (Grant, 2008; Grant & Berry, 2011; Lazauskaite-Zabielske, Urbanaviciute, & Bagdziuniene, 2015). These studies depict intrinsically motivated employees as uniformly good organizational citizens in organizations, helping those around them whenever a need arises.

However, an emerging literature has begun to note that the benefits of intrinsic motivation may depend on the motivation of others around the focal individual (Chen & Kanfer, 2006; Kanfer, Chen, & Pritchard, 2008). Not only is individuals' intrinsic motivation itself affected by an organizational climate that emphasizes or devalues intrinsic motivation (Kavussanu & Roberts, 1998; Selfriz, Duda, & Chi, 2016) but also the outcomes of individual-level intrinsic motivation may be affected by teammates' levels of intrinsic motivation (Chen & Gogus, 2008). For example, a team climate of emphasizing intrinsic motivation is a stronger predictor of individuals' self-efficacy than individuals' own value in intrinsic motivation (Kavussanu & Roberts, 1998). Likewise, employees contribute less to team goals and feel less satisfied with their teams when their teammates' levels of intrinsic motivation are different from their own (Kristof-Brown & Stevens, 2001). More intrinsically motivated employees may therefore be more discriminating about whom they act prosocially toward.

In the current research, we take an intra-group perspective on intrinsic motivation and build theory that begins with the assumption of heterogeneity in the intrinsic motivation levels of teammates. We then suggest that employees with higher intrinsic motivation exhibit greater prosocial behaviors only when their teammates' intrinsic motivation is high. In contrast, these employees may not help their teammates having lower intrinsic motivation. Building on the

person-centered moral judgment literature (Goodwin, Piazza, & Rozin, 2014; Uhlmann, Pizarro, & Diermeier, 2015), we suggest that this occurs because more intrinsically motivated employees are more likely to infer their teammates' morality from their intrinsic motivation. Intrinsically motivated employees value the joy and learning opportunities their work provides, where such valuation is verified when their teammates also have high intrinsic motivation but challenged when their teammates' intrinsic motivation is low. To validate their own valuation of work, these employees would elevate (devalue) the perceived morality of their teammates having high (low) intrinsic motivation. The inference of morality in turn determines the employees' levels of helping toward the teammates, as the employees believe that more moral others deserve more help.

Our research contributes to the literature on intrinsic motivation in three ways. First, we extend prior literature by showing that one well-known positive outcome of intrinsic motivation—prosociality (Grant, 2008; Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006)—does not play out in isolation. In team contexts, teammates' intrinsic motivation is an important factor that affects how much employees' intrinsic motivation leads to prosocial behavior. Second, we contribute to the recent body of research on the dark side of intrinsic motivation (Kim, Campbell, Shepherd, & Kay, 2020; Shin & Grant, 2019). Instead of illustrating a negative outcome of intrinsic motivation directly, we argue that its positive impact may depend on context—specifically, on teammates' intrinsic motivation. Finally, our results suggest that perceived morality can be an important mechanism explaining why employees care about and react to teammates' intrinsic motivation. By showing that intrinsic motivation is an important source of moral perceptions of self and others, our research brings together the literature on intrinsic motivation and the

literature on moral perceptions (Aquino & Americus, 2002; Monin & Jordan, 2010). We show that the reason we work is not just our personal preference—it also is a signal of our morality.

## **3.2 Theoretical Background**

### ***3.2.1 Toward a Nuanced View of Intrinsic Motivation and Helping***

Intrinsic motivation enhances employees' desire to help others in many ways. Employees with high intrinsic motivation work because they are more likely to be motivated by the satisfaction and personal growth coming from their work (Amabile et al., 1994; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Gagné & Deci, 2005). Because they pursue what satisfies their inherent curiosity, more intrinsically motivated employees seek higher levels of achievement than those required by their job. This tendency increases their extra-role citizenship behaviors because organizations do not always financially reward such extra-role efforts (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006). Not only does intrinsic motivation increase citizenship behaviors; it also mediates the relationship between various organizational practices and helping among coworkers, such as participative leadership (Sağnak, 2016), employee development programs (Kuvaas & Dysvik, 2009), and team voice behaviors (Ohana, 2016). Intrinsic motivation further enhances employees' desire to help the beneficiaries of their work, as employees with such a desire become even more creative, persistent, and high-performing (Grant, 2008; Grant & Berry, 2011). This evidence portrays more intrinsically motivated employees as “saints” who unequivocally help others.

Teams, however, rarely consist of employees with similar levels of intrinsic motivation. Employees working on the same task and in the same organization often report varying degrees of intrinsic motivation (e.g., Amabile et al., 1994; Ryan & Connell, 1989). This may occur because employees attach widely different meanings to their jobs: some emphasizing the meaningfulness of their work, and others, monetary or career aspects (Wrzesniewski, McCauley,

Rozin, & Schwartz, 1997). Intrinsic motivation also varies at different levels, ranging from the global (personality) to one's life context (domain) to situational factors (state) (Vallerand, 1997). As a result, two employees with the same job may find their overall jobs equally interesting but may have different levels of intrinsic motivation for the same task (Shin & Grant, 2019). These findings combine to suggest that levels of intrinsic motivation are likely to vary within a team.

When employees and their teammates have different levels of intrinsic motivation, prior research suggests two different possibilities for individuals' extra-role prosocial behavior toward teammates. One perspective focuses on attributes of the helper and suggests that those with higher intrinsic motivation are more likely to engage in helping indiscriminately because they aim for higher levels of achievement at work beyond what is required (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006). In this view, engagement in more prosocial behaviors is one way for more intrinsically motivated employees to improve their teams' achievement and do more of the work they enjoy (Finkelstein, 2011; Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006), no matter how intrinsically motivated their teammates are. A second perspective implies that employees' prosocial behavior may instead depend on characteristics of the employees receiving help (i.e., teammates): more specifically, on their levels of intrinsic motivation. Recent research highlights that employees with lower intrinsic motivation are viewed negatively at work, receiving lower performance feedback (Derfler-Rozin & Pitesa, 2020; DeVoe & Iyengar, 2004) and being disadvantaged at hiring (Woolley & Fishbach, 2018) even when other observable qualities are held equal. Given these negative reactions, it is possible that employees with lower levels of intrinsic motivation will also receive less help from their teammates, no matter how intrinsically motivated the helping employees are.

Here, we integrate these perspectives by suggesting that the extra-role prosocial behaviors of employees depend both on their own intrinsic motivation and their perceptions of teammates' intrinsic motivation. Intrinsically motivated employees value their work and the personal joy and satisfaction of innate curiosity the work brings (Amabile et al., 1994; Deci & Ryan, 1985), where their prosocial behaviors are often geared toward such values (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006). When teammates are believed to have also high intrinsic motivation, they would value similar aspects (i.e., personal joy and growth) of the same work, given that they and their teammates engage in common team projects. Because the values of the employees and their teammates overlap, employees with high intrinsic motivation can not only well understand their teammates' needs but also expect the teammates' recognition of their help. Thus, intrinsically motivated employees would help their teammates more when the teammates' intrinsic motivation is higher.

As an example, consider a team working on a coding project. An employee with high intrinsic motivation would like to test a new, efficient coding technique she recently learned, although she is not required to do so. When teammates share higher intrinsic motivation, they would be more likely to understand her desire to test this new technique. They may further support her efforts by working together with her to learn the new technique or suggesting something else she could try because they also want personal growth at work. Expecting these supportive reactions will make employees with high intrinsic motivation help their teammates more when teammates' intrinsic motivation is higher.

In contrast, in teams with varying levels of employee intrinsic motivation, employees with high intrinsic motivation would be less likely to perform prosocial behaviors when their teammates' intrinsic motivation is lower. In this case, what the employees and their teammates

value are mismatched; whereas some employees value the work for the joy and personal growth it delivers, other teammates may not value the work or may emphasize different aspects of the work (e.g., financial rewards). In the previous coding project example, if the teammates had lower intrinsic motivation, they would not appreciate the intrinsically motivated employee's attempt to apply the new code. Because it is not required, they may believe that such an attempt is unnecessary, or even a waste of time, as it adds complexity. The intrinsically motivated employee would likely have difficult time understanding what her teammates need and expect them to not acknowledge her help. Therefore, employees with higher intrinsic motivation will be less likely to help their teammates as their intrinsic motivation lessens due to the mismatch of values.

Finally, we predict that employees with lower intrinsic motivation would engage in lower levels of extra-role prosocial behaviors than those with higher intrinsic motivation regardless of their teammates' perceived intrinsic motivation. In general, these employees are less interested in going above and beyond to perform extra-role helping and would thus be less concerned about their teammates' extra-role needs or recognition. Further, these employees are less likely to care about their teammates' valuation of the work because they do not value the work themselves. For employees with low intrinsic motivation, the work is not what they truly want to do; rather, it is likely a means to achieve what they value (Touré-Tillery & Fishbach, 2014). For example, in our previous example, an employee with low intrinsic motivation might not apply a new code because it creates additional hassle on her end. Even when she tries to apply the code, she would do it for reasons other than her own joy or personal growth, and thus would not care about her teammates' valuation of such aspects of the work. Taken together, employees with lower intrinsic motivation will be more indifferent to teammates' intrinsic motivation.

So far, our theory suggests that teammates' perceived intrinsic motivation moderates the relationship between employees' intrinsic motivation and helping. Employees with high intrinsic motivation increase their prosocial behaviors as their teammates' intrinsic motivation increases, whereas employees with low intrinsic motivation remain indifferent to teammates' intrinsic motivation. Thus, we propose the following:

**Hypothesis 1.** Teammates' perceived intrinsic motivation moderates the relationship between employees' intrinsic motivation and helping, such that employees with higher intrinsic motivation perform more helping when they perceive the intrinsic motivation of their teammates as high.

### ***3.2.2 Perceived Morality as a Mechanism***

We further propose that intrinsically motivated employees are less (more) likely to help teammates with lower (higher) intrinsic motivation because they think of these teammates as less (more) moral. Prior research on moral perceptions (Goodwin et al., 2014; Leach, Ellemers, & Barreto, 2007) suggests that perceptions of others' moral character or morality are formed early in one's social interactions. Further, moral perceptions tend to be viewed as more central to one's identity than other perceptions, such as warmth and competence (Leach et al., 2007). Applying this lens to the team context, we theorize that employees with higher intrinsic motivation are more likely to infer morality from their teammates' high intrinsic motivation because it verifies their own values; in contrast, these employees would infer a lack of morality from their teammates' low intrinsic motivation because of threat that may arise from interacting with those whose values are incongruent with their own.

Research suggests that individuals who feel like "suckers" (e.g., doing a task that is boring and tedious) engage in moralization when they observe others who refuse to engage in the same work (Jordan & Monin, 2008). As a result, they are more likely to become "saints" and to



consider those individuals as less moral as a way to justify their choice to do the work (Jordan & Monin, 2008). Similarly, teammates with lower intrinsic motivation may be less likely to value what employees with high intrinsic motivation consider as important at work, such as enjoying the work itself or accepting new challenges as opportunities to learn. When interacting with these less intrinsically motivated individuals, more intrinsically motivated employees may experience a threat because they perceive those with a lower level of intrinsic motivation as questioning their *own* engagement in the work. This disconnect increases the employees' need to justify their values attached to work, thereby reinforcing moral superiority over those who do not subscribe to the same values associated with work.

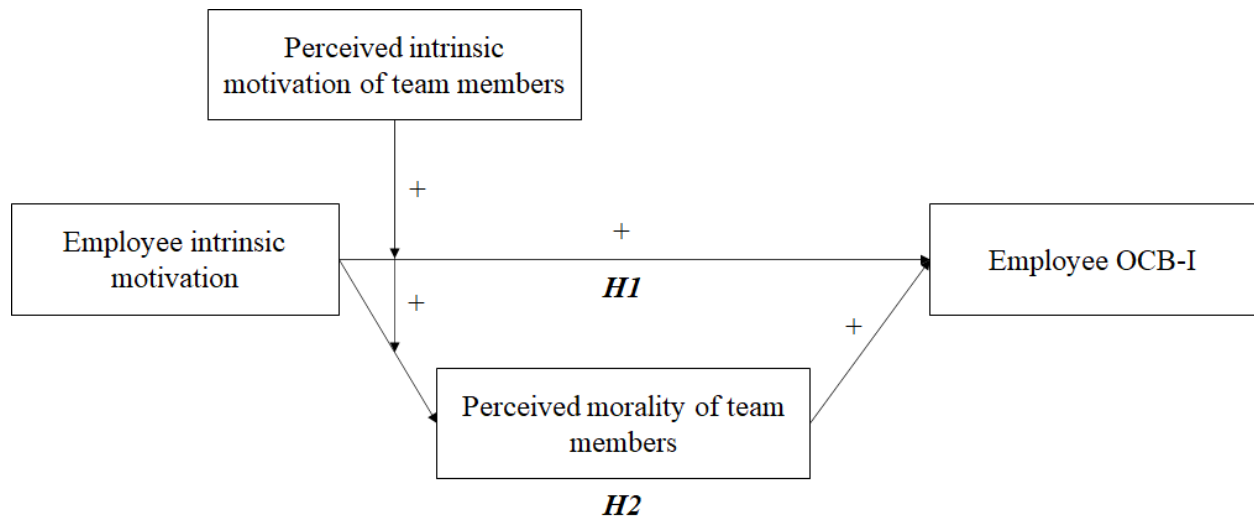
On the contrary, we posit that employees with high intrinsic motivation will consider teammates with higher intrinsic motivation as more moral. Intrinsically motivated teammates hold similar values associated with the work, thereby validating the employees' own valuation socially. Prior research indicates that this self-verification leads to not only individuals' moral perceptions of others such as trustworthiness but also their subsequent commitment to others (Burke & Stets, 1999). Further, these employees and the teammates both likely put extra-role effort into the work stemming from their intrinsic motivation (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006). Because individuals tend to associate others' efforts with those others' morality even when such efforts do not lead to tangible benefits (Celniker et al., 2020), employees with high intrinsic motivation may link intrinsically motivated teammates' extra-role efforts with their morality. Taken together, employees with higher intrinsic motivation may attribute the (lack of) intrinsic motivation as an implicit cue of (lacking) morality, while those with lower intrinsic motivation may not have the same level of association between the two.

When employees consider their teammates to be moral, they are likely to engage in prosocial behaviors toward them. Literature on moral perception suggests that individuals reward moral others because they think they deserve recognition (Turillo, Folger, Lavelle, Umphress, & Gee, 2002). Further, individuals desire to be close to moral others (Brambilla, Hewstone, & Colucci, 2013; Leach et al., 2007), as interacting with them evokes positive feelings including gratitude, elevation, and admiration (Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek, 2007). In team contexts, helping can be an effective way for employees to both acknowledge their teammates' morality and continue interacting with them. Indeed, a study found that individuals tend to help moral others even when doing so entails personal sacrifice (Turillo et al., 2002). Thus, we expect that employees will be more likely to help their teammates who are perceived to be moral.

Taken together, our theory constitutes a first-stage moderated mediation model whereby teammates' intrinsic motivation positively moderates the relationship between employees' intrinsic motivation and prosocial behaviors through perceived morality. Employees with higher intrinsic motivation are more likely to associate their teammates' intrinsic motivation with morality, which in turn leads to more prosocial behaviors (see Figure 3-1 for the proposed theoretical model).

**Hypothesis 2.** The perceived morality of teammates mediates the relationship in Hypothesis 1, such that employees with higher intrinsic motivation perceive their teammates as more moral when their teammates' perceived intrinsic motivation is higher; and the perceived morality leads to employees' helping.

Figure 3-1. Theoretical Model



### 3.3 Methods

To test our hypotheses, we conducted two field studies and one lab study. The two field studies examined Hypothesis 1 about the relationship between employees' and their teammates' intrinsic motivation and employees' help. The lab experiment tested Hypothesis 2 about the role of perceived morality as a mechanism. In Study 1, we conducted a field survey of over 1,000 employees working on over 150 project teams at a financial institution in Latin America. We examined whether employees' own intrinsic motivation and their teammates' intrinsic motivation collectively affect employees' tendency to help their teammates in need. In Study 2, we conducted a longitudinal field study with MBA students at a midwestern university working in teams offering consulting to real-world companies. We adopted a longitudinal study design and surveyed each teammate twice over a three-month period, first on their intrinsic motivation and then on their helping. This study further complements Study 1, as we asked participants to rate the level of help they received from each other. Finally, in Study 3, we conducted a pre-registered and highly powered experiment with more than 1,000 participants to establish internal validity and to identify our hypothesized underlying mechanism, perceived morality of

teammates. In this study, each participant engaged in a team task, and we varied teammates' intrinsic motivation at two levels. Participants subsequently indicated their perceptions of their teammates' morality and their desire to help their teammates beyond their role. All code and data associated with the current manuscript can be found at

[https://osf.io/k35mw/?view\\_only=636e954fbffa4c10a584d0ef10edbb4f](https://osf.io/k35mw/?view_only=636e954fbffa4c10a584d0ef10edbb4f).

### ***3.3.1 Study 1***

#### **Sample and Procedures**

Our initial sample included data from 1,268 employees at a large Latin American financial institution. In this firm, each employee is assigned to one project team having one supervisor. We grouped employees reporting to a common supervisor as a team. We excluded the supervisor from this definition of team, for several reasons. First, supervisors have distinct responsibilities and can have different impacts on employee behavior compared with coworkers. Specifically, supervisors' intrinsic motivation can either override the impact of coworkers' intrinsic motivation because it sets an expectation for subordinates, or weaken the impact because employees do not think of supervisors as teammates in equal positions. We excluded supervisors from the data to avoid this confusion<sup>4</sup>. Second, our data are unique in that a supervisor of one team can be a subordinate on another team; that is, one team can consist of employees who have their own lower-level teams. We therefore excluded them from their

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<sup>4</sup> Our multilevel model accounts for the nested nature of the data, but we still tried controlling for leaders' intrinsic motivation. We first tried matching the data but realized that not all leaders answered the survey. Only about half of the sample (449 out of 784) had leader intrinsic motivation information available. The interaction term of interest became insignificant when we only used this portion of the sample, regardless of whether we controlled for leader intrinsic motivation or not. However, we cannot tell why this is the case because we lost too many observations and we do not exactly know why some leaders are not in the dataset. One possible reason is that some leaders might have provided their personal email addresses (which we used as an identifier). We therefore tried controlling for leader fixed effects; that is, we considered the leader identifier variable as a factor variable. With 185 leader dummy terms entered, we still found a significant effect for the interaction term of interest. This result supports our hypotheses.

supervising teams so that they only appear as part of their higher-level teams. Following this procedure, we excluded 372 employees from the sample because they had subordinates but were not part of any other work team besides their supervised teams (i.e., they had no supervisor). We further excluded 112 observations where a team consisted of only one employee and their supervisor because excluding the supervisor left only one employee on the team. Our final total sample size was 781 employees, who were members of 185 teams.

When we compared employees excluded from the sample with employees remaining in the sample, excluded employees were more intrinsically motivated ( $p = .020$ ), younger ( $p < .001$ ), and more likely to be female ( $p = .003$ ). We found no statistically significant differences in prosocial behavior ( $p = .172$ ), extrinsic motivation ( $p = .949$ ), or tenure ( $p = .899$ ). In our final sample, the average employee age was 34 years, and average tenure at the company was four years. Team size (i.e., number of teammates) ranged from 2 to 16 ( $M = 6.03$ ,  $SD = 3.78$ ).

### **Measures**

All measures used a 7-point response scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree).

***Employees' and teammates' intrinsic motivation.*** Employees were asked to indicate their level of intrinsic motivation for their work. After a prompt (“Why are you motivated to do your work?”), four-item measure from Grant (2008) followed: (a) “because I enjoy the work itself,” (b) “because it’s fun,” (c) “because I find the work engaging,” and (d) “because I enjoy it” ( $\alpha = .82$ ). The average intrinsic motivation score was  $M = 5.80$  ( $SD = 1.10$ ).

Our moderator is teammates' intrinsic motivation, by which we refer to teammates' average levels of intrinsic motivation. We focus on the average levels because all teammates worked together toward a shared goal in these teams and thus all teammates' intrinsic motivation

would likely matter in shaping employees' prosocial behavior. Following previous research on the congruence between individuals and teammates (Kristof-Brown & Stevens, 2001), we calculated teammates' average levels of intrinsic motivation by averaging the intrinsic motivation scores of all teammates excluding the focal individual's score. For example, when an employee has two teammates with intrinsic motivation scores of 4 and 6, the teammates' average intrinsic motivation for the employee is 5. We additionally included the dispersion of teammates' intrinsic motivation inside a team as a control variable because teammates likely have widely different reasons for working (e.g., Wrzesniewski et al., 1997). Indeed, teams explain 6% of the variance in individual-level intrinsic motivation in our data ( $ICC = 0.064$ ).

***Prosocial behaviors toward coworkers.*** We adapted Williams and Anderson's (1991) scale for organizational citizenship behaviors targeted at coworkers (OCB-I) to measure employees' prosocial behaviors toward coworkers. Because of survey-length restrictions, we selected the first two items of the scale: (a) "I help others who have been absent," and (b) "I help others who have heavy workloads" ( $r = .67$ ).

***Control variables.*** The effects of teammates' motivation can be different for small and large teams because employees on small teams may have more chances to interact with individual teammates than employees on large teams. Thus, we controlled for team size, measured as the number of employees on each team.

We also controlled for individual employees' and teammates' average extrinsic motivation to better isolate the effects of intrinsic motivation. When employees with higher extrinsic motivation believe that helping teammates can increase team performance and, in turn, the rewards, they may engage in more prosocial behavior. On the other hand, if helping others is not associated with team performance or extrinsic rewards, these employees' prosocial behavior

may decrease. We used the four-item Extrinsic Motivation subscale from the Situational Motivation Scale (SIMS) (Guay, Vallerand, & Blanchard, 2000). Following the same prompt as that for intrinsic motivation, employees responded to the following items: (a) “because I am supposed to do it,” (b) “because it is something I have to do,” (c) “because I don’t have a choice,” and (d) “because I feel I have to do it” ( $\alpha = .83$ ).

We also controlled for individual employees’ prosocial motivation and teammates’ average prosocial motivation because employees with high prosocial motivation or those working with highly prosocial teammates may engage in more helping behaviors. We used Grant’s (2008) scale ( $\alpha = .85$ ) to measure prosocial motivation and calculated the prosocial motivation of teammates by averaging their prosocial motivation scores excluding each focal individual’s score.

Intrinsic motivation, as well as its effects, may be subject to demographic differences (D’Lima, Winsler, & Kitsantas, 2014; Shin & Grant, 2019). To ascertain whether our results are robust to demographic differences, we also controlled for gender, age, and tenure. We ran all analyses with and without control variables, and the results for the main effects and the interaction remained the same.

### **Study 1: Results**

Means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlations for all study variables are in Table 3-1. We see a high correlation ( $r = .61$ ) between employees’ intrinsic motivation and prosocial motivation, in line with the results of previous research (e.g.,  $r = .55$  in Grant, 2008). Scholars have reported positive (e.g., DeVoe & Iyengar, 2004), negative (Guay et al., 2000), and insignificant (e.g., Pelletier et al., 1995) correlations between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. In our sample, employees’ intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are uncorrelated ( $r = .06$ ).

Table 3-1. Study 1: Means, Standard Deviations, Zero-Order Pairwise Correlations

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<b>1.</b>	<b>2.</b>	<b>3.</b>	<b>4.</b>
1. OCB-I	5.92	1.09				
2. Intrinsic motivation	5.80	1.10	.31***			
3. Teammate intrinsic motivation	5.80	.69	.03	.12***		
4. Team size	6.03	3.77	-.07	.04	.06	
5. SD (intrinsic motivation)	.94	.49	-.12***	-.29***	-.47***	.13***
6. Extrinsic motivation	3.73	1.66	-.01	.06	.02	.00
7. Teammate extrinsic motivation	3.73	.99	.00	.02	.04	.00
8. Prosocial motivation	6.29	.92	.32***	.61***	.06	-.00
9. Teammate prosocial motivation	6.29	.52	.04	.07	.61***	-.00
10. Age	33.04	9.63	.03	.17***	.11**	-.02
11. Gender	.45	.5	-.03	.02	.00	-.01
12. Tenure (in months)	89.96	86.77	.09**	.12***	.08*	-.11*

	<b>5.</b>	<b>6.</b>	<b>7.</b>	<b>8.</b>	<b>9.</b>	<b>10.</b>	<b>11.</b>
6. Extrinsic motivation	.00						
7. Teammate extrinsic motivation	.01	.01					
8. Prosocial motivation	-.15***	.05	-.01				
9. Teammate prosocial motivation	-.26***	-.01	.04	.08*			
10. Age	-.06	-.03	-.01	.06	.01		
11. Gender	.01	-.08*	.03	.06	.03	.06	
12. Tenure (in months)	-.10**	-.02	-.03	.03	.03	.66***	.04

N = 784; \*\*\* p < .001, \*\* p < .01, \* p < .05



We used multilevel regression analyses to test our hypotheses using the *mixed* command in Stata MP 14.0. We also centered the individual and team motivation variables to avoid multicollinearity with their product terms (Aiken & West, 1991). Table 3-2 reports our results.

*Table 3-2. Study 1: Results of Multilevel Regression Analyses for OCB-I*

Predictors	(1) OCB-I	(2) OCB-I	(3) OCB-I
Team size	-.02 (.01)	-.02 (.01)	-.02+ (.01)
SD(intrinsic motivation)	-.13 (.09)	-.06 (.10)	.07 (.11)
Extrinsic motivation	-.02 (.02)	-.02 (.02)	-.02 (.02)
Teammate extrinsic motivation	.02 (.04)	.01 (.04)	.00 (.04)
Prosocial motivation	.37*** (.04)	.26*** (.05)	.25*** (.05)
Teammate prosocial motivation	.00 (.08)	.04 (.09)	.04 (.09)
Age	-.01 (.01)	-.01 (.01)	-.01 (.01)
Gender	-.11 (.07)	-.11 (.07)	-.10 (.07)
Tenure	.00* (.00)	.00+ (.00)	.00* (.00)
Intrinsic motivation		.17*** (.04)	.20*** (.04)
Teammate intrinsic motivation		-.04 (.08)	.03 (.08)
Intrinsic motivation × Teammate intrinsic motivation			.15** (.05)
Constant	3.91*** (.61)	4.46*** (.73)	4.41*** (.73)
Observations	784	784	784
Number of groups	185	185	185
Log likelihood	-1,120.41	-1,112.43	-1,108.36

Standard errors in parentheses

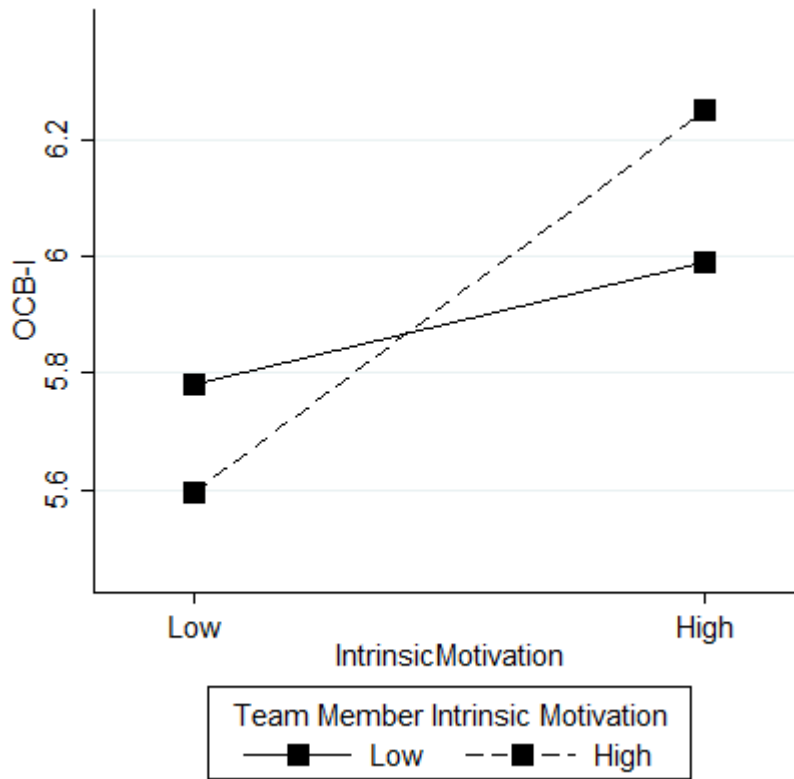
\*\*\*  $p < .001$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$ , +  $p < .10$

Model 1 includes only our control variables. We find a statistically significant and positive association between employees' prosocial motivation and prosocial behavior ( $b = .37$ ,  $SE = .04$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Despite the common expectation that women are more altruistic than men (Brañas-Garza, Capraro, & Rascón-Ramírez, 2018), we do not see a statistically significant effect for demographic variables such as age and gender. Employee tenure is positively related to prosocial behavior, indicating that employees who spent more time in the organization also helped their teammates more ( $b = .001$ ,  $SE = .001$ ,  $p = .034$ ).

Model 2 includes main effects (i.e., employees' and teammates' intrinsic motivation), and Model 3 includes the interaction term between the two variables. Following the findings of previous research (e.g., Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006), employees' intrinsic motivation had a statistically significant association with employees' prosocial behavior ( $b = .20$ ,  $SE = .04$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Interestingly, teammates' intrinsic motivation was not related to employees' prosocial behavior ( $b = .03$ ,  $SE = .08$ ,  $p = .734$ ). Crucially, and in line with Hypothesis 1, the coefficient for the interaction term between individual-level intrinsic motivation and teammates' intrinsic motivation in Model 3 is statistically significant in predicting employees' prosocial behavior ( $b = .15$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $p = .004$ ).

We subsequently conducted simple slopes analysis to better understand our interaction effect. For teammates whose intrinsic motivation is high (+1 *SD* above the mean), the positive relationship between the focal member's intrinsic motivation and prosocial behavior was more pronounced ( $b = .30$ ,  $SE = .06$ ,  $p < .001$ ) than it was for those whose intrinsic motivation is low (-1 *SD* below the mean) ( $b = .10$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $p = .06$ ). The simple slopes are depicted in Figure 3-2.

Figure 3-2.  
Study 1: Effects of Individual and Team Intrinsic Motivation on OCB-I



### **Study 1: Discussion**

The results of Study 1 suggest that employees with higher intrinsic motivation are more likely to help teammates who have high intrinsic motivation than teammates who have low intrinsic motivation. Although these findings are consistent with Hypothesis 1, they are subject to several limitations. First, having employees rate both their own intrinsic motivation and their OCB-I is subject to common method bias. Second, employees' self-rated prosocial behavior could have been inflated because of social desirability. That is, employees' desires to think positively about themselves may have driven them to report higher scores for prosocial behavior. Finally, collecting the data in a Latin American financial institution raises questions about the generalizability of these findings to other contexts. To address these concerns, we conducted Study 2.

### 3.3.2 Study 2

We conducted a second field study to investigate the effect of individuals' and teammates' intrinsic motivation on prosocial behavior. Study 2 constructively replicates Study 1 by measuring the hypothesized effects over two waves. In addition, because we asked teammates to rate each others' prosocial behavior rather than report their own prosocial behavior, Study 2 allows us to account for potential social desirability concerns in OCB-I, in which employees may self-report high levels of prosocial behavior in part because of impression management. Our design also alleviates a possible common method bias in Study 1, as we asked different sources to rate our independent variable, intrinsic motivation, and the dependent variable, prosocial behavior. Our two-phase survey design further decreases common method bias concerns by introducing the gap between the times we measured our independent and dependent variables (Rindfleisch, Malter, Ganesan, & Moorman, 2008).

#### **Sample, Design, and Procedures**

The sample consisted of 421 MBA students from a large public midwestern university who worked on 86 student consulting teams working full-time over a seven-week period on consulting projects for various client organizations both within and outside the United States. We collected data from this sample in two waves. At about the midpoint of the project, teammates completed the first survey, which measured their levels of intrinsic motivation; and at the completion of the project (~3–4 weeks later), they responded to the second survey, which measured the perceived prosocial behavior of their teammates during the project. Team size (number of teammates) ranged from 3 to 6 ( $M = 5.08$ ,  $SD = .90$ ). The average age of participants was 30.08 ( $SD = 2.13$ ), 43.26% were female, and 68.56% were U.S. citizens.

#### **Measures**

All measures used a 7-point scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree).

***Individuals' and teammates' intrinsic motivation.*** At the midpoint of the project, participants were asked to indicate their levels of intrinsic motivation for the project. After a prompt (“Why are you motivated to work on your upcoming project?”), a three-item measure adapted from Grant (2008) followed: (a) “because I enjoy the work itself,” (b) “because it’s fun,” and (c) “because I find the work engaging” ( $\alpha = .90$ ). The average intrinsic motivation score was 6.10 out of 7 ( $SD = .72$ ). We calculated teammates’ intrinsic motivation as in Study 1, by averaging intrinsic motivation scores of all teammates excluding the score of the focal individual ( $M = 6.10$ ,  $SD = .38$ ). Teams explained 28% of the variance in individual-level intrinsic motivation ( $ICC = 0.280$ ).

We were subject to a strict survey-length limitation for Study 2 because we surveyed MBA students at our own institution in round-robin style (in which teammates rate one another). To motivate students, we tied the survey subject to their course materials and provided each student a detailed, individualized report after the survey. Further, we had to drop one item each from the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation scales. Using our data from Study 1 and Study 3, we found that the correlation between the intrinsic motivation measures with and without the dropped item was very high ( $r = .99$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

***Prosocial behaviors toward coworkers.*** At the project’s completion, all members of each team rated the prosocial behavior of other teammates. We used the same OCB-I scale as in Study 1; the scale was adapted from Williams and Anderson (1991) and included (a) “[Teammate name] helped others who have been absent” and (b) “[Teammate name] helped others who have heavy workloads” ( $r = .75$ ). We calculated each participant’s prosocial behavior by averaging all teammates’ ratings of the participant’s prosocial behavior.

**Control variables.** Following Study 1, we controlled for team size and the standard deviation of intrinsic motivation for each team. We also controlled for individual participants' and teammates' average extrinsic motivation using a measure adapted from the SIMS (Guay et al., 2000) ( $\alpha = .95$ ). To be consistent with Study 1, we again included participants' age, gender, and previous work experience in years as a control variable. Additionally, we controlled for participants' U.S. citizenship status as our sample included international students. Because of the survey-length limitation, we could not include prosocial motivation. As in Study 1, we ran all analyses with and without control variables, and our results do not change meaningfully.

### **Study 2: Results**

Table 3-3 represents the means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlations for all study variables. Whereas we saw no statistically significant correlation between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in Study 1, our sample for Study 2 shows a statistically significant negative correlation between the two ( $r = -.36$ ). This difference may suggest that, compared with employees, students are more likely to consider the two types of motivation to be incompatible.

*Table 3-3. Study 2: Means, Standard Deviations, Zero-Order Pairwise Correlations*

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<b>1.</b>	<b>2.</b>	<b>3.</b>	<b>4.</b>
1. Perceived OCB-I	5.92	1.01				
2. Intrinsic motivation	5.69	1.19	.11*			
3. Teammates intrinsic motivation	5.67	.78	.13**	.34***		
4. Team size	5.08	.90	-.11*	-.07	-.08	
5. SD (intrinsic motivation)	2.81	1.41	-.07	-.36***	-.54***	.32***
6. Extrinsic motivation	4.59	1.71	.01	-.36***	-.14**	-.00
7. Teammate extrinsic motivation	4.58	.93	.08	-.19***	-.41***	.00
8. Age	30.08	2.13	-.11*	.00	-.02	.03

9. Gender	.57	.50	-.10*	.08	-.06	.05
10. Previous working experiences	5.47	1.82	-.09	.04	.05	.02
11. U.S. citizenship status	.68	.47	.22***	-.13*	.01	-.09

	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
6. Extrinsic motivation	.17***					
7. Teammate extrinsic motivation	.31***	.09				
8. Age	.05	.02	.10*			
9. Gender	.04	-.10*	.05	.16**		
10. Previous working experiences	-.06	-.03	.04	.53***	.05	
11. U.S. citizenship status	-.02	.12*	.02	-.16**	-.11*	-.10*

N=421; \*\*\* p<.001, \*\* p<.01, \* p<.05

We again used multilevel moderation analyses. We used the *mixed* command in Stata MP 14.0 and centered the individual and team motivation variables (Aiken & West, 1991). Results in Table 3-4 largely replicate what we saw in Study 1. Model 1 includes only our control variables, and we again do not see any statistically significant correlation between demographic variables such as gender and age and participants' prosocial behavior. Interestingly, participants with U.S. citizenship engaged in more prosocial behavior than participants without U.S. citizenship ( $b = .39, SE = .10, p < .001$ ).

Table 3-4. Results of Multilevel Regression Analyses for Perceived OCB-I

Predictors	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Perceived OCB-I	Perceived OCB-I	Perceived OCB-I
Team size	-.06 (.07)	-.08 (.07)	-.07 (.07)

SD (intrinsic motivation)	-.06 (.05)	.03 (.06)	.06 (.06)
Extrinsic motivation	-.01 (.03)	.01 (.03)	.01 (.03)
Teammate extrinsic motivation	.11+ (.07)	.17* (.07)	.15* (.07)
Age	-.02 (.03)	-.02 (.03)	-.02 (.03)
Gender	-.13 (.09)	-.13 (.09)	-.13 (.09)
Previous working experiences	-.03 (.03)	-.03 (.03)	-.04 (.03)
U.S. Citizenship	.39*** (.10)	.41*** (.10)	.38*** (.10)
Intrinsic motivation		.11* (.04)	.15** (.05)
Teammate intrinsic motivation		.07* (.03)	.10** (.03)
Intrinsic motivation × Teammate intrinsic motivation			.05** (.02)
Constant	6.73*** (.84)	6.26*** (.83)	6.08*** (.82)
Observations	421	421	421
Number of groups	86	86	86
Log likelihood	-572.66	-566.99	-562.57

Standard errors in parentheses

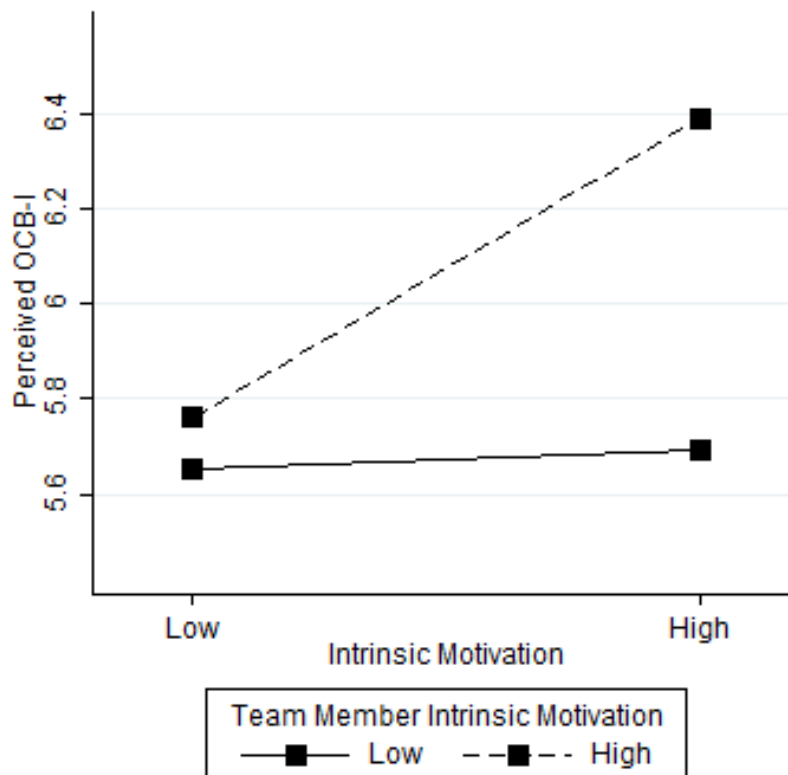
\*\*\*  $p < .001$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$ , +  $p < 0.1$

Model 2 includes main effects (i.e., employees' and teammates' intrinsic motivation). Notably, both intrinsic motivation ( $b = .11$ ,  $SE = .04$ ,  $p = .012$ ) and extrinsic motivation ( $b = .07$ ,  $SE = .03$ ,  $p = .012$ ) of teammates were significantly associated with perceived OCB-I. Model 3 includes the interaction term between these two variables. In line with Hypothesis 1, we find that the coefficient for the interaction term is statistically significant and positive in predicting employees' prosocial behavior ( $b = .05$ ,  $SE = .02$ ,  $p = .003$ ). We subsequently conducted simple slopes analysis to better understand our interaction effects. As in Study 1, at lower levels of team



intrinsic motivation ( $-1 SD$ ), the relationship between individual intrinsic motivation and prosocial behavior is weaker ( $b = .02, SE = .05, p = .75$ ) in comparison to higher levels ( $+1 SD$ ) of team intrinsic motivation ( $b = .26, SE = .07, p < .001$ ). The simple slopes are depicted in Figure 3-3. Employees with higher intrinsic motivation engage in more prosocial behavior as their teammates' intrinsic motivation increases, but employees with lower intrinsic motivation are indifferent to their teammates' intrinsic motivation.

*Figure 3-3.*  
*Study 2: Effects of Individual and Team Intrinsic Motivation on Perceived OCB-I*

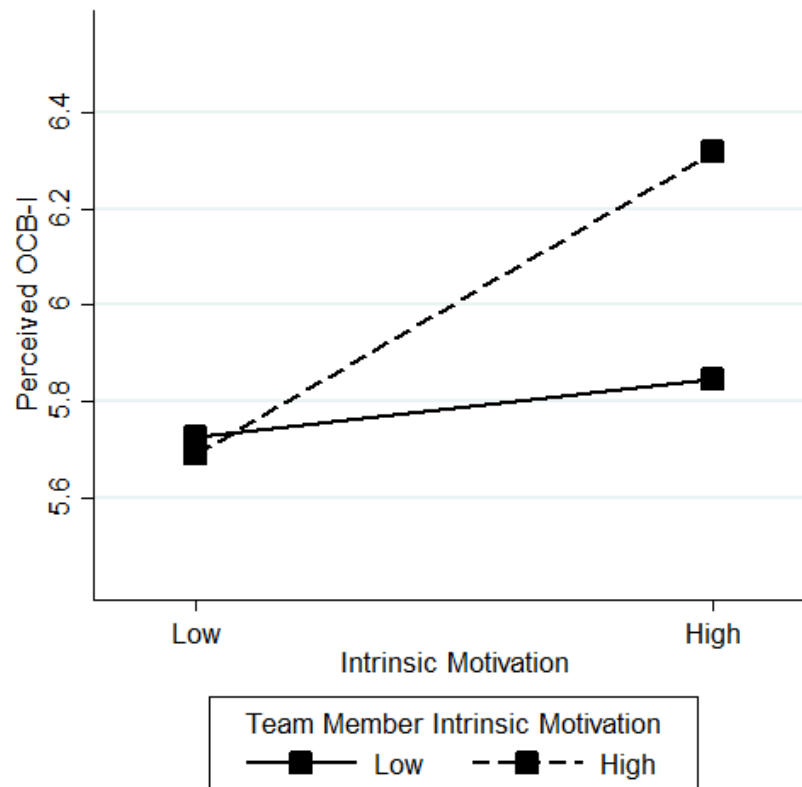


**Robustness Checks**

In our main analysis, we calculated teammates' intrinsic motivation by averaging all teammates' intrinsic motivation scores. Although we controlled for the standard deviation of intrinsic motivation, we further conducted a robustness check by running the same analysis at the

interpersonal level with 1,714 dyads of participants and their teammates. In this analysis, the dependent variable was each participant's prosocial behavior as rated by the teammate, the independent variable was participants' own intrinsic motivation, and the moderator was the intrinsic motivation of the teammate who rated participants' prosocial behavior. In line with our prior results and with Hypothesis 1, we find that the interaction effect was statistically significant and positive ( $b = .10$ ,  $SE = .02$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The simple slopes are presented in Figure 3-4. At lower levels of team-member intrinsic motivation ( $-1 SD$ ), the relationship between individual intrinsic motivation and prosocial behavior was not statistically significant ( $b = -.04$ ,  $SE = .04$ ,  $p = .31$ ), whereas the relationship is statistically significant at higher levels ( $+1 SD$ ) of team-member intrinsic motivation ( $b = .21$ ,  $SE = .04$ ,  $p < .001$ ). These findings provide additional confidence that participants with higher intrinsic motivation are more sensitive to their teammates' intrinsic motivation when deciding whether to engage in prosocial behavior.

Figure 3-4.  
Study 2 Robustness Check: Interpersonal-Level Effects of Individual and Team Intrinsic Motivation on Perceived OCB-I



### **Study 2: Discussion**

The results of Study 2 replicate our Study 1 results and extend them in several ways. First, we introduced a time gap between when we measured intrinsic motivation and when we measured prosocial behavior, and demonstrated that the impact of individuals' and teammates' intrinsic motivation is sustained over the course of the team's project. Second, we addressed common method bias and social desirability by asking teammates to rate each others' prosocial behavior. Despite these strengths, neither Study 1 nor Study 2 allowed for causal inference given their correlational nature. In addition, neither study allowed us to test our hypothesized mechanism of perceived morality, Hypothesis 2. We subsequently designed Study 3 to address these shortcomings. Study 3 also tests the effects of teammates' perceived, rather than actual,

intrinsic motivation by manipulating participants' perceptions of teammates' intrinsic motivation directly.

### **3.3.3 Study 3**

We conducted a pre-registered experiment with virtual workers to provide causal evidence and to identify one underlying mechanism that links the interaction between individual and team intrinsic motivation to prosocial behavior. We conducted an a priori power analysis, which revealed that with a sample size of 230 per group (i.e., a total sample size of 920) we can achieve a power of .90. To account for potential data-quality dropouts, and in order to be highly powered to estimate bounds around null effects, we pre-registered a sample size of 1,500 participants. We followed the pre-registration without exceptions (see <https://aspredicted.org/blind.php?x=4df598>).

#### **Sample, Design, and Procedures**

We recruited 1,500 participants through Prolific (<https://www.prolific.co/>). The sample was 49.61% female, and 36.32 years old on average ( $SD = 13.02$ ). Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions (working with teammates described as having low vs. high intrinsic motivation) using a between-subjects design. Figure 3-5 depicts the overall flow of the experiment.

Participants were told that they would work with two other teammates to detect blood abnormalities in medical images. In reality, participants worked alone, and teammates did not exist. We adapted a task used in Quinn, Myers, Kopelman, and Simmons (2020) and asked participants to identify problematic cells by clicking on small purple spots inside enlarged pink blood cells called Howell-Jolly bodies (HJBs). The circled area in Figure 3-6 shows an example of this task. We told participants that they would be rewarded as a team and that they would have

opportunities to work with their teammates by cross-checking their work in order to capture more abnormalities and increase accuracy.

Figure 3-5. Study 3: Experiment Flow

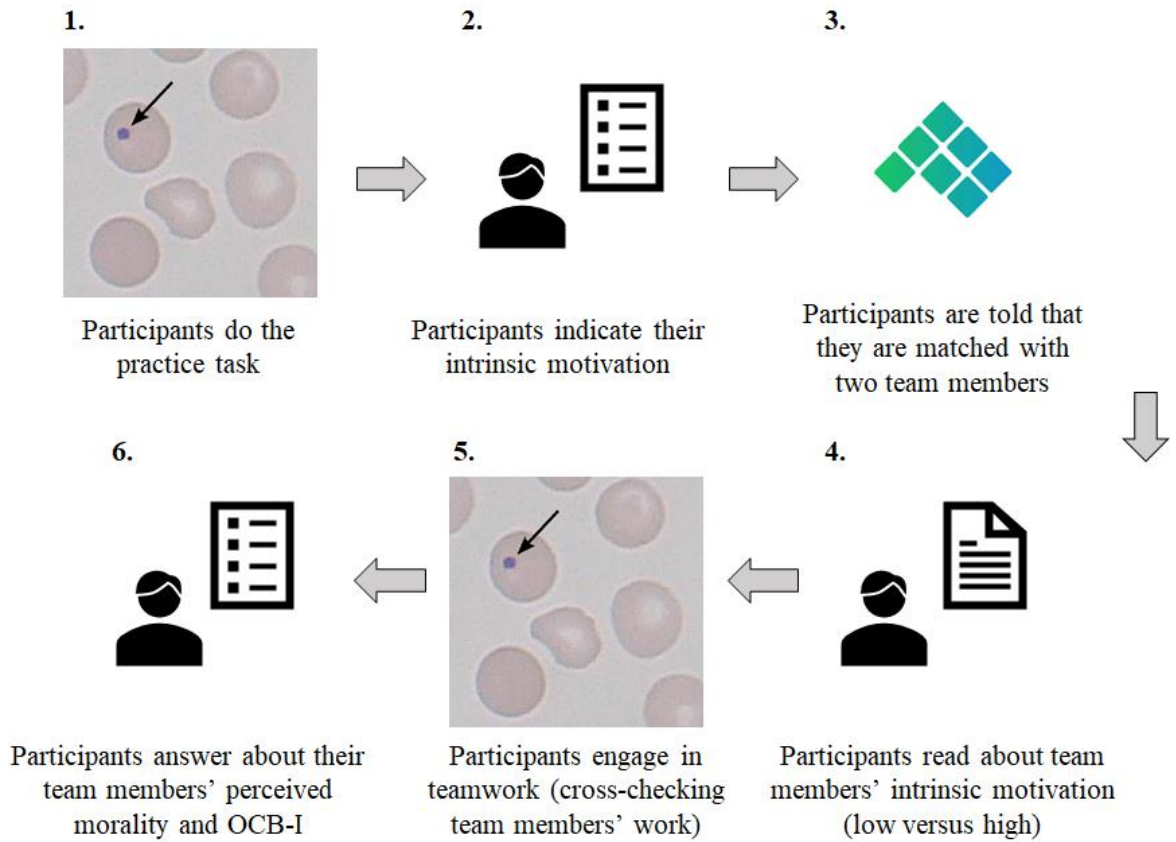
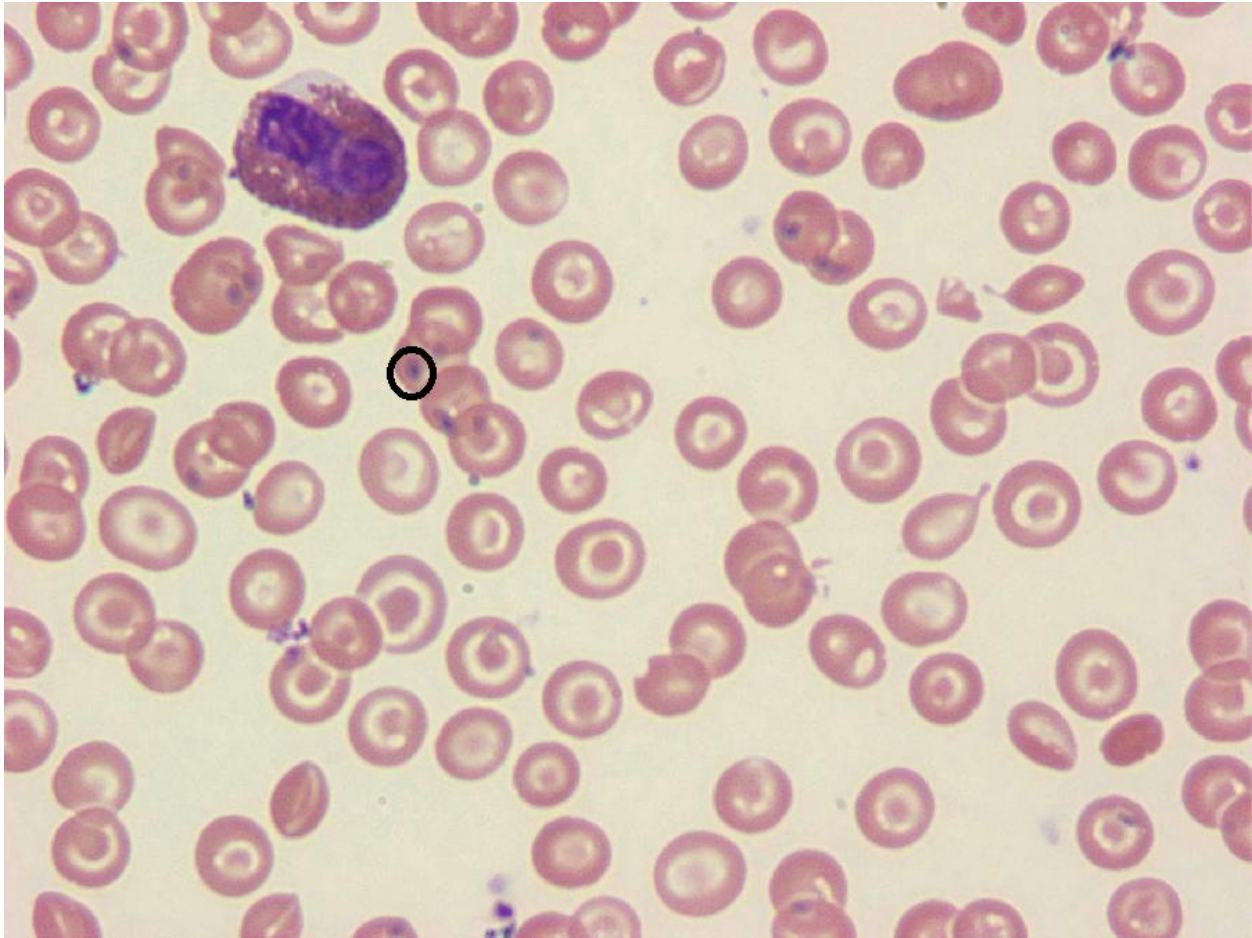


Figure 3-6. Study 3: Sample Image of Blood Abnormalities



**Manipulation of teammates' intrinsic motivation.** Participants were told that they would work in teams of three. We created two different versions of teammates' profiles to vary their levels of intrinsic motivation. We told participants that we wanted them to learn more about their teammates and showed them screen captures of two (fake) teammates' profiles. Figure 3-7 shows the profile of one teammate (called JP) in the high-intrinsic-motivation condition. In the *high teammate intrinsic motivation* condition, JP rated 7 out of 7 for three intrinsic motivation items, and 6 out of 7 for the remaining, fourth intrinsic motivation item; similarly, the other teammate (nicknamed Blue) rated 7 out of 7 for all four items. In addition, short messages that appeared next emphasized that they were intrinsically motivated to do the task (e.g., Blue wrote: "I like the

idea of helping doctors and this looks so fun!”). For the *low teammate intrinsic motivation* condition, JP rated 1 out of 7 for three intrinsic motivation items and 2 for the remaining, fourth intrinsic motivation item, and Blue rated 1 out of 7 for all four items. Their short messages also further emphasized their low intrinsic motivation (e.g., Blue wrote: “I like the idea of helping doctors but this doesn’t look fun at all”).

*Figure 3-7. Study 3: Teammate Profile in the High Team Intrinsic Motivation Condition*

Please take some time to review the information of **JP**.

**JP**

**How do you feel about this task?**

I love simple tasks so I think I will like this

Characters remaining: 53

**I am motivated to participate in this research...**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
because I enjoy the work itself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
because it's fun	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
because I find the work engaging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
because I enjoy it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

After participants saw their teammates’ profiles, they worked on another, similar medical image to capture blood abnormalities. Subsequently, they saw the same image with some pre-

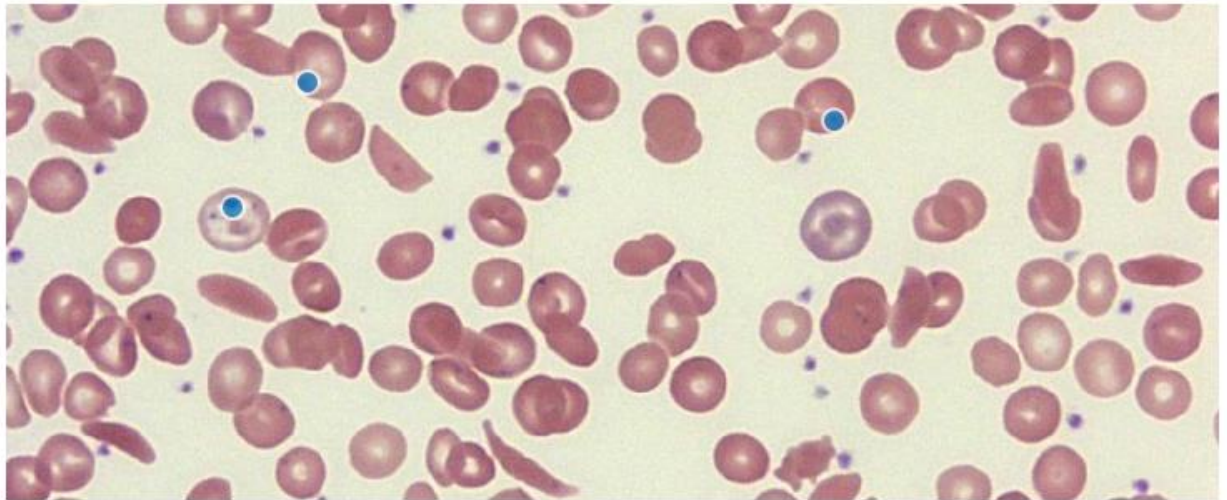
selected spots, which we told them was their teammates' work, and were asked to add more spots to the image (see Figure 3-8). Once this cross-check was done, we told all participants that their team could spot three additional abnormalities in total as a result of the teamwork.

*Figure 3-8. Study 3: Cross-Checking Teamwork*

Below is the work done by **JP**.

Please add more checks to the image as you find them.

**JP**



### **Measures**

***Individuals' intrinsic motivation.*** All participants completed one practice round and rated their own levels of intrinsic motivation before the team matching process. After participants finished the practice round, we used the same four-item intrinsic motivation scale in Grant (2008) that we used in Study 1 to measure participants' intrinsic motivation ( $\alpha = .95$ ).

***Perceived morality of teammates.*** After the cross-checking teamwork, participants answered several questions about their general experience (e.g., "The matching process was smooth") to disguise the true purpose of the study. After the general questions, they rated their



perception of their teammates' morality. We measured participants' perceived morality of teammates using Tappin and McKay's (2017) five-item, 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). After a prompt ("I think my teammates would be..."), the following items were listed: "Honest," "Trustworthy," "Fair," "Respectful," and "Principled" ( $\alpha = .94$ ).

***Prosocial behaviors toward coworkers.*** After rating teammates' perceived morality, participants indicated their willingness to help teammates if they were to work together again. Whereas Study 1 and Study 2 used two of seven items from Williams and Anderson's (1991) OCB-I scale, we used all seven items from Study 3. After a prompt ("If I work on another task with the same teammates, I would..."), participants responded to the following items: "help them when they are absent," "help them when they have heavy work loads," "assist them with their work (when not asked)," "take time to listen to their problems and worries," "go out of way to help them," "take a personal interest in them," and "pass along information to them" ( $\alpha = .92$ ). The correlation between two-item and seven-item OCB scales was very high ( $r = .89$ ).

***Attention and manipulation check.*** We presented two questions to all participants after they reviewed their teammates' motivation. In the first question, participants saw a prompt ("Based on their answers, why are your teammates participating in this study?") and answered a question ("Because they like it"), ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). This question served as an attention check. The second question had a different prompt ("Regardless of their answers, why do you think your teammates are participating in this study?"), and participants answered the same question ("Because they like it") using the same 1 to 7 scale. This question checked whether our manipulation effectively affected participants' perceptions of their teammates' intrinsic motivation.

**Control variables.** Following Study 1 and Study 2, we controlled for individual participants' extrinsic motivation using the SIMS (Guay et al., 2000) ( $\alpha = .88$ ). We also included participants' age, gender, and ethnicity as demographic variables.

### **Study 3: Results**

Table 3-5 represents the results of the moderated mediation model.

*Table 3-5. Study 3: Results of Moderated Mediation*

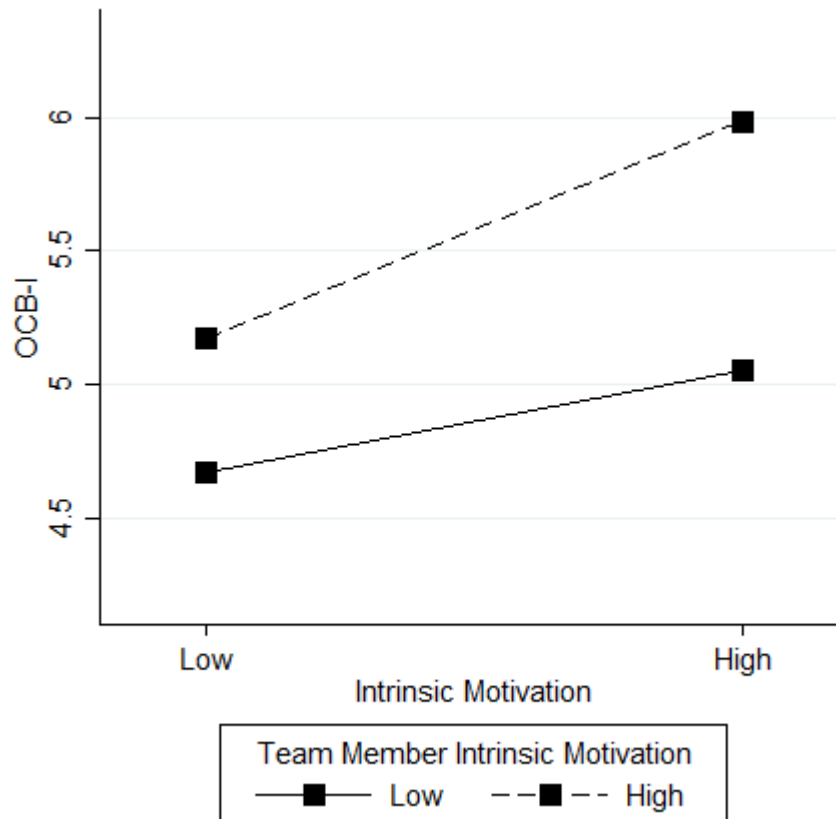
	Results
<i>Effects on OCB-I</i>	
The interaction of intrinsic motivation and teammates' intrinsic motivation	$b=.18, SE=.05, t=3.73, p<.001$
Pairwise comparison between the high teammate intrinsic motivation condition and the low teammate intrinsic motivation condition	$M_{\text{difference}} = .71, p<.001$
<i>Effects of moderated mediation</i>	
The interaction of intrinsic motivation and teammates' intrinsic motivation on perceived morality of teammates	$b=.22, SE=.05, t=4.74, p<.001$
Perceived morality as a significant predictor of OCB-I	$b=.48, SE=.03, t=18.93, p<.001$
The overall index of moderated mediation	.11 (95% CI [.05, .16])
The conditional indirect effect of teammates' intrinsic motivation on OCB-I through perceived morality at high intrinsic motivation	.35 (95% CI [.26, .44])
The conditional indirect effect of teammates' intrinsic motivation on OCB-I through perceived morality at low intrinsic motivation	.60 (95% CI [.48, .72])

**Manipulation Checks.** The average rating of participants' teammates' intrinsic motivation was 6.45 ( $SD = .03$ ) in the high-intrinsic-team condition and 1.47 ( $SD = .04$ ) in the low-intrinsic-team condition. A one-way ANOVA shows that the difference is statistically significant ( $F(1,1302) = 8,085, p < .001, \eta^2 = .75$ ). Only 33 of 660 participants (5%) in the high-

intrinsic-team condition rated their teammates' intrinsic motivation as low (1–3), and 3 of 653 participants (0.5%) in the low-intrinsic-motivation condition rated their teammates' intrinsic motivation as high (5–7) despite the manipulation. Excluding these observations did not affect the results, and we excluded them in all subsequent analyses.

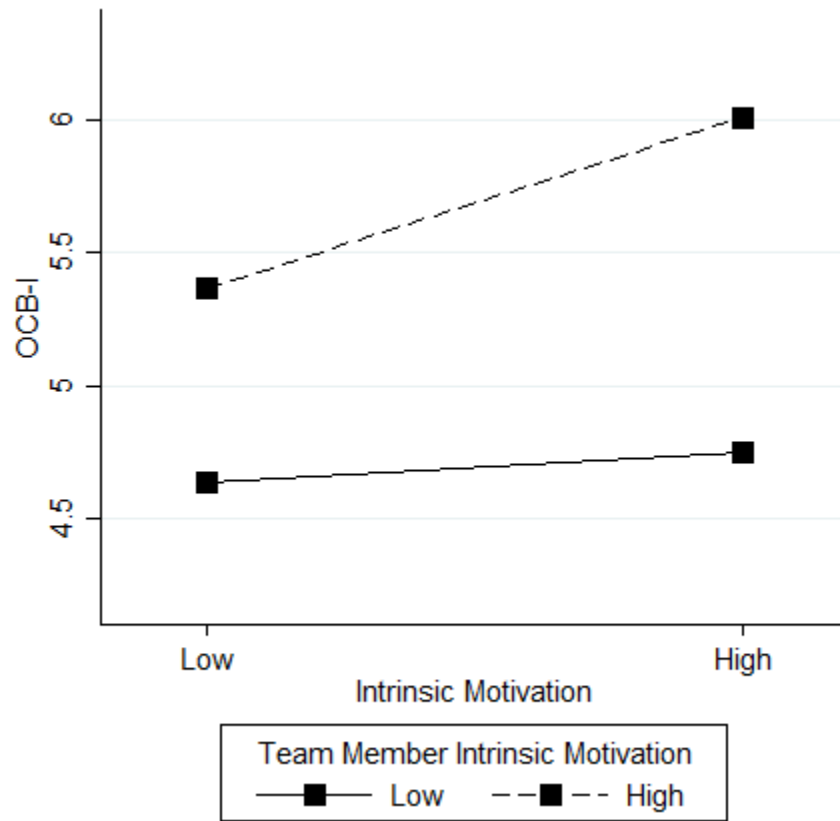
**Moderation Analysis.** We first aimed to replicate our findings from Study 1 and Study 2. We first conducted a two-way factorial ANCOVA on participants' OCB-I, where the interaction term was significant ( $F(1,1263) = 14.18, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = .01$ ). We then ran a regression analysis on participants' OCB-I with participants' intrinsic motivation, a dummy variable for the two conditions (low vs. high teammates' intrinsic motivation), the interaction term between the two, and the control variables as predictors. The interaction term was statistically significant and positive ( $b = .17, SE = .05, p < .001$ ), replicating the results in Study 1 and Study 2. We subsequently conducted simple slopes analysis to better understand our interaction effects. As in Study 1 and Study 2, and in line with Hypothesis 1, at lower levels of team intrinsic motivation (i.e., in the *low team intrinsic motivation* condition), the relationship between individual intrinsic motivation and prosocial behavior was weaker ( $b = .04, SE = .03, p = .19$ ) in comparison to higher levels of team intrinsic motivation (i.e., in the *high team intrinsic motivation* condition;  $b = .27, SE = .03, p < .001$ ). The simple slopes are shown in Figure 3-9. We also found that participants' own intrinsic motivation was related to higher prosocial behavior ( $b = .16, SE = .03, p < .001$ ) but that teammates' intrinsic motivation was not.

Figure 3-9.  
 Study 3: Effects of Individual and Team Intrinsic Motivation on OCB-I



**Moderated Mediation Analysis.** We next tested whether perceived morality of teammates mediated the effect of individuals' and their teammates' intrinsic motivation on prosocial behavior, our Hypothesis 2. The two-way factorial ANCOVA was significant ( $F(1,1263) = 22.14, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = .02$ ). We then conducted a regression analysis of the interaction between employees' and teammates' intrinsic motivation on teammates' perceived morality with the control variables included. We found a statistically significant and positive interaction effect ( $b = .22, SE = .05, p < .001$ ). The simple slopes are presented in Figure 3-10.

Figure 3-10.  
 Study 3: Effects of Individual and Team Intrinsic Motivation on Morality



To complete the test of moderated mediation and to calculate the size of the conditional indirect effect at one standard deviation below and above individuals' own intrinsic motivation, we employed the bootstrap procedures recommended by Hayes and Preacher (2010). We constructed bias-corrected confidence intervals (CIs) based on 10,000 random samples with replacements from the full sample. Analyses reveal that the overall index of moderated mediation was .11, 95% CI [.06, .16]. In the *high teammate intrinsic motivation* condition, the conditional indirect effect of participants' intrinsic motivation on prosocial behavior through teammates' perceived morality was .13, 95% CI [.09, .17]. In the *low teammate intrinsic motivation* condition, the conditional indirect effect was .02, 95% CI [-.01, .06]. These findings

thus support Hypothesis 2, that perceived morality is one mechanism linking the interaction between individual and team intrinsic motivation on prosocial behavior.

### **Study 3: Discussion**

Study 3 replicates the findings in Study 1 and Study 2 and tests perceived morality as one underlying mechanism. Study 3 also provides causal evidence for our hypothesized effects. Taken together, the three studies show that teammates' intrinsic motivation is an important contextual factor in the relationship between employees' intrinsic motivation and prosocial behavior.

### **3.4 Summary**

More intrinsically motivated employees are often depicted as indiscriminately helping other organizational members who are in need. In contrast, we here suggest that such employees show *selective* prosociality. Based on theories of moral perception, we hypothesized that more intrinsically motivated employees may be more likely to help only those teammates who also have higher intrinsic motivation because they perceive the latter to be more moral. That is, because employees who have higher intrinsic motivation value the work and the enjoyment and learning it provides, they consider their teammates moral only when they value the work similarly. Through two field studies and one pre-registered lab experiment, we found consistent evidence in support of our theoretical model. The effect of individual employees' intrinsic motivation on prosocial behavior changed depending on teammates' intrinsic motivation: employees with higher intrinsic motivation were more likely to help other intrinsically motivated employees. This observation was robust across naturally occurring and experimentally induced variations in teammates' intrinsic motivation and across self-reported and other-rated prosocial behavior. Combined, these studies highlight the importance of a more social, interpersonal team

perspective in understanding an intrapersonal phenomenon, that is, how individual intrinsic motivation is shaped by team intrinsic motivation in predicting prosocial behavior.

## Chapter 4 Intrinsic Motivation Display as Impression Management

### 4.1 Purpose of the Study

A graduation speech from a popular CEO<sup>5</sup> urges students to find a job they can enjoy. Another CEO addresses the importance of loving your work on social media<sup>6</sup>. Organizational leaders strive to cultivate intrinsic motivation in their organizations and to hire intrinsically motivated candidates (Derfler-Rozin & Pitesa, 2020; Woolley & Fishbach, 2018). Intrinsic motivation refers to employees' voluntary engagement in their work for the satisfaction that comes from work itself (Amabile et al., 1994; Deci & Ryan, 1985). Intrinsic motivation leads to many positive work outcomes, such as performance (Cerasoli et al., 2014; Grant, 2008) creativity (Amabile, 1985), and prosocial behaviors (Finkelstein, 2011; Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006). These positive outcomes of intrinsic motivation increased leaders' positive attention to intrinsic motivation in the current managerial discourse (Derfler-Rozin & Pitesa, 2020). Indeed, leaders evaluate intrinsically motivated employees favorably at hiring (Woolley & Fishbach, 2018), performance evaluation (Derfler-Rozin & Pitesa, 2020), and project pitches (Jiang, Yin, & Liu, 2019). These examples all illustrate that intrinsic motivation is an important employee quality that leaders seek for.

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<sup>5</sup> In Steve Jobs' Stanford graduation speech, he described that he could have early success with Apple because "he[I] was lucky — he[I] found what he[I] loved to do early in life."

<sup>6</sup> "I[i]f you love your work, it (mostly) does not feel like work" from Elon Musk's Twitter account, as quoted in Griffith, 2019.



I challenge an underlying assumption of these practices and the scholarly findings that support them: Employees show their true levels of intrinsic motivation to others. Employees may not need to have high intrinsic motivation to convince others that they have it. Instead, they can exaggerate their levels of intrinsic motivation to create an image of enjoying their work. Specifically, I argue that employees would not only be able to but also be willing to inflate the levels of intrinsic motivation they show. First, employees likely acknowledge the positive managerial discourse surrounding intrinsic motivation because it is so prevalent, or because many of them are middle managers who prefer intrinsically motivated subordinates themselves. Indeed, employees evaluate more intrinsically motivated colleagues as more “good, noble, and admirable” (Heath, 1999). Second, showing and even exaggerating intrinsic motivation involve low risk. Because work motivation is not visible, employees can shape how others think about their motivation by changing the ways they communicate about it. Employees can thus inflate their intrinsic motivation expressed in their job interviews, pitches, surveys, and conversations with their colleagues.

In this paper, I define employees’ efforts to show their intrinsic motivation to others as *intrinsic motivation display*. I examine the antecedents and consequences of intrinsic motivation display by employing a set of diverse studies, including a quantitative technique to analyze participants’ qualitative responses called participant concept mapping (Behfar, Peterson, Mannix, & Trochim, 2008), a field study of 223 leader-follower dyads, and an experiment with 303 participants. I first examine whether employees engage in intrinsic motivation display frequently, to whom they try to show intrinsic motivation, and why they believe that intrinsic motivation display can have positive impacts. In doing so, I delve into the role of moral concerns in employees’ intrinsic motivation display. Employees’ desire to look morally good to their

colleagues serves as a core mechanism linking relationship quality and employees' intrinsic motivation display. In Study 2, I also test whether employees' intrinsic motivation display indeed increases colleagues' perceptions of employees' intrinsic motivation. In general discussion, I delve into the effectiveness of intrinsic motivation display further and explain how employees can show intrinsic motivation effectively.

This paper contributes to the literatures on intrinsic motivation and impression management in several important ways. First, I challenge the assumption of previous research that employees report their true intrinsic motivation to others. Instead, employees may inflate the levels of their intrinsic motivation. This result questions the common research practice where scholars ask participants to self-report their intrinsic motivation. Scholars might not have captured the true effects of intrinsic motivation because participants tend to exaggerate it. This exaggeration would reduce the variance of intrinsic motivation scholars could study and would keep them from observing the true effects of intrinsic motivation. Likewise, leaders' asking of employees' intrinsic motivation in contexts such as job interviews could be problematic. These leaders might have not been able to recognize those who truly have high levels of intrinsic motivation because most job candidates tend to inflate it.

Second, I extend the literature on the potential negative effect of intrinsic motivation (Derfler-Rozin & Pitesa, 2020; Shin & Grant, 2019). If employees are successful in inflating their intrinsic motivation, their intrinsic motivation display incurs costs to managers because managers' efforts to hire and reward intrinsically motivated employees become much more difficult. In contrast, if employees' intrinsic motivation display is not successful, it exploits employees because showing intrinsic motivation requires extra efforts but does not bring the intended benefit. This result indicates that the positive managerial discourse surrounding intrinsic

motivation may end up adding costs to employees or managers, or both. Finally, I contribute to the impression management literature by examining the role of intrinsic motivation display in relationship maintenance. Employees utilize intrinsic motivation display not only to create positive first impressions at contexts such as hiring but also to manage their ongoing positive relationships with colleagues. This paper thus answers a scholarly call for impression management research in the context of relationship maintenance beyond relationship creation (Bolino, Long, & Turnley, 2016).

## **4.2 Theory**

### ***4.2.1 Intrinsic Motivation Display***

Intrinsic motivation has received ample attention from both researchers and practitioners as a source of positive work outcomes. Intrinsic motivation is defined as employees' desire to work for the enjoyment coming from the work itself (Amabile et al., 1994; Deci, 1975; Gagné & Deci, 2005). Scholars found that intrinsic motivation boosts employees' creativity (Amabile, 1985, 1998), persistence (Grant, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2000), performance (Cerasoli et al., 2014; Erez et al., 1990; Menges, Tussing, Wihler, & Grant, 2017; Shin & Grant, 2019), and prosociality at work (Finkelstein, 2011; Grant & Berry, 2011; Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006). Leaders prefer to hire intrinsically motivated employees (Woolley & Fishbach, 2018) and give these employees positive performance evaluations (DeVoe & Iyengar, 2004). Investors are willing to give more funding to entrepreneurs showing greater joy in their pitch (Hsu, Haynie, Simmons, & McKelvie, 2014; Jiang et al., 2019; Warnick, Murnieks, McMullen, & Brooks, 2018). These examples show that not only scholars but also leaders value intrinsic motivation and its positive outcomes.

A possibly imperfect assumption in these previous findings, however, is that the levels of intrinsic motivation employees show to others accurately represent their true levels of intrinsic motivation. Scholars have relied on the self-reported measure of intrinsic motivation (e.g., Amabile et al., 1994; Guay et al., 2000; Ryan & Connell, 1989). Organizational leaders often ask job candidates' or employees' reasons to work directly. An assumption behind these practices is that employees would report their true levels of intrinsic motivation to scholars and leaders. However, employees may acknowledge the positive managerial discourse surrounding intrinsic motivation and its positive work outcomes (Derfler-Rozin & Pitesa, 2020). In addition, they may understand the value of being perceived as intrinsically motivated because they prefer intrinsically motivated colleagues themselves. Therefore, employees may exaggerate the levels of intrinsic motivation they show to others in order to signal their ability to deliver valuable work outcomes and their positive work ethic. If this is true, employees' self-reported intrinsic motivation would be inflated, especially when they feel a stronger need to create a positive image of themselves.

In this paper, I define employees' effort to show their intrinsic motivation to others as *intrinsic motivation display*. Employees may display intrinsic motivation in different ways. They can explicitly tell others that they are working because they like the work itself. Alternatively, employees can show, or mimic, typical behaviors of intrinsically motivated workers hoping that others might notice and draw inferences of what such behaviors imply (i.e., their intrinsic motivation). In addition, employees may engage in intrinsic motivation display both by inflating the levels of intrinsic motivation they show and by increasing the frequency they express intrinsic motivation at work. For example, employees who have low intrinsic motivation can exaggerate their intrinsic motivation by telling others that they are working because they love the

work. On the other hand, employees who have high intrinsic motivation may frequently talk about how much they like their work without inflating the implied level of intrinsic motivation. Therefore, employees can engage in intrinsic motivation display regardless of their true intrinsic motivation levels; intrinsic motivation display is employees' explicit attempts to which they are trying to show intrinsic motivation to others.

Employees may be willing to engage in intrinsic motivation display both because it is an effective and an accessible tactic for employees. First, employees can manipulate the ways their intrinsic motivation is shown because it is not directly visible. Whereas individuals frequently make internal (i.e., they wanted to do it) or external (i.e., they had to do it) attributions of why others work, these attributions are not always accurate (E. E. Jones & Nisbett, 1987; Kelley, 1973), and are amenable to manipulation. For example, employees often discount others' intrinsic motivation to work because cues for intrinsic motivation are not readily available like cues for external attribution (e.g., money) (Heath, 1999). Given that others must depend on visible cues to attribute invisible intrinsic motivation, employees can engage in intrinsic motivation display to control how others perceive their motivation.

Second, intrinsic motivation display does not involve much risk because employees may not need to deceive others in order to show high levels of intrinsic motivation. Deceiving others is a risky tactic for impression management because it backfires when others realize that they are deceived (Steele, 1988). To show intrinsic motivation, however, employees do not always need to tell a lie. Instead, they can simply emphasize tasks they like and avoid talking about tasks they dislike in a conversation. This tactic is likely feasible in most cases because work motivation exists at multiple levels, from global (personality) to life context (domain) to situational (state) (Vallerand, 1997). For example, an employee may have a low trait-level intrinsic motivation

(global level) but may find her current job interesting (domain level) because she very much likes one specific task (state level). This employee can engage in intrinsic motivation display by telling her supervisor that she greatly enjoys the task, while she hides the fact that she does not enjoy other parts of her work.

Finally, when employees must deceive others and fake their intrinsic motivation, it is relatively easy to disguise compared to other official records and qualifications. To show high levels of intrinsic motivation, employees only need to describe how much they enjoy their work. For example, a pilot can tell her supervisor that she has always been fascinated by the idea of flight and that she loves being a pilot in order to boost the supervisor's perception of her intrinsic motivation. In actuality, she may not like her job at all. Employees can also imitate commonly known characteristics of intrinsically motivated workers. Engaging in emotional labor is such an example, where employees show positive facial expressions even when they do not find their work enjoyable (Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 1983). In sum, employees can easily engage in intrinsic motivation display as an effective and safe way to boost their image at work.

#### ***4.2.2 Intrinsic Motivation Display as Impression Management at Work***

To theorize when and why employees engage in intrinsic motivation display, I draw on the literature of impression management. Impression management refers to an individual's attempt to control "how one is perceived by other people (Leary, 2019, p.2)." Individuals may deliberately regulate information they share (Schlenker & Weigold, 1992) or may naturally constrain their behaviors to create desired images (Leary, 1995). They aim to make positive impressions in most cases (e.g., looking competent, positive, or attractive), but they may want to look strong, mean, or even threatening depending on situations (Leary, 1995). Similar to what I described for intrinsic motivation display above, impression management does not always

involve deception. Individuals may tell a lie to make positive impressions, but it backfires significantly when they are caught in a lie (Bolino et al., 2016; Leary, 1995). Instead of deceiving others, they can carefully select which information to disclose and which to hide in order to make desired impressions (Schlenker & Weigold, 1992). For example, a scholar may talk about her new publication at a conference to look competent but may hide the news in a casual conversation with her colleagues to avoid coming across as arrogant.

Theories of impression management in organizational contexts emphasize the importance of the situation (Bolino, Kacmar, Turnley, & Gilstrap, 2008; Gardner & Martinko, 1988; S. J. Wayne & Liden, 1995). Individuals' impression management is effective when their own definitions and the audience's definitions of the situation are congruent (Gardner & Martinko, 1988). For example, showing professionalism is appropriate and beneficial in certain contexts (e.g., a job interview) but is not helpful in others (e.g., a dinner with close friends). When the impression management situation defined by a focal individual does not match the situation defined by the audience, impression management likely fails. For instance, an employee's attempt to create friendly images of herself in front of her coworkers (goal) by sharing her personal life (tactic) would not be effective in a workplace where work-life separation is highly valued (situational demand). Failed impression management leads to embarrassment (Miller & Leary, 1992) and to negative feedback of being inappropriate or inauthentic (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2006; Stern & Westphal, 2010).

In this paper, I argue that a pre-existing positive relationship is a powerful situation where employees are motivated to create positive impressions of themselves to maintain it. Positive interactions with colleagues generate and sustain employees' energy at work, enhancing their productivity and mood (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003; Stephens, Heaphy, & Dutton, 2011).

Further, positive relationships provide employees many valuable resources, such as sponsorship, networking opportunities, and high-stakes assignments from the leader (Liden, Sparrowe, & Wayne, 1997), and information, emotional support, and confirmation from the peer (Kram & Isabella, 1985; Wikaningrum, 2007). Employees would thus try to maintain positive relationships they already have with their colleagues by constantly showing their best self to such colleagues (Bolino et al., 2008).

Intrinsic motivation display can be an effective way for employees to sustain positive relationships at work. By showing intrinsic motivation, employees can signal that they can keep contributing to the relationships because they are committed and engaged colleagues. In addition, intrinsic motivation display can be an ingratiation tactic toward colleagues, regardless of whether employees intend such ingratiation. That is, because colleagues are an important part of employees' work, employees may be able to indicate how much they like and appreciate their colleagues by showing how much they enjoy their work. Finally, the information about employees' work motivation is personal in a sense that it denotes the employees' personal relationships with their own work (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Gagné & Deci, 2005). Therefore, employees would feel more natural to talk about their motivation when they already have more intimate relationships with others. Employees' relationship quality with others will thus increase their intrinsic motivation display toward those others.

**Hypothesis 1.** Relationship quality increases employees' intrinsic motivation display.

It is noteworthy that intrinsic motivation display is not incompatible with authenticity at work. A counterargument to the above hypothesis may be that employees who dislike their work would want to be authentic toward their colleagues with whom they have high relationship quality and to show these colleagues their "true self." However, employees may still be able to display their intrinsic motivation while remaining authentic. As stated earlier, intrinsic



motivation display does not always involve deception. For example, employees may share more frustrations at work with their colleagues with whom they have closer relationships, but these employees may also share more moments of joy with such colleagues, however rare such joyful moments are. Even when employees do not experience any joyful moments at work, they may try to be authentic only to the extent that doing so would not harm the relationships. Because intrinsic motivation display is an effective way for employees to communicate their commitment and potential contributions at work, employees would be less motivated to share their disliking of work in work settings compared to other intimate settings such as family and friends. Instead, employees would engage in intrinsic motivation display by not disclosing how much they dislike their work, and being authentic does not mean that employees should share every aspect of themselves.

#### ***4.2.3 Employees' Desire to Look Moral as a Mediating Mechanism***

I argue that morality concerns serve as an important mediating mechanism of intrinsic motivation display. Morality refers to perceived correctness of social targets as being trustworthy, principled, and adherent to important social values (Abele et al., 2016; Brambilla, Rusconi, Sacchi, & Cherubini, 2011). Having a moral image at work is important because perceived morality enhances relationship building at work. Individuals make positive value judgments about moral others and help and reward them even at their own expense (Turillo et al., 2002). They make frequent contacts with moral others (Brambilla, Hewstone, & Colucci, 2013) and try to connect with those others (Greenebaum, 2012; Skitka & Mullen, 2002). In collaboration contexts, employees put a greater emphasis on their teammates' morality than on sociableness and competence (Leach et al., 2007). Employees' relationship quality with others

will thus increase their desire to look moral to those others at work in order to maintain the relationship.

Employees' desire to look moral would in turn increase their intrinsic motivation display because showing intrinsic motivation can boost their perceived morality. Individuals perceive others to be moral when their values are consistent with others' behaviors and attitudes (Fehr et al., 2015; Graham et al., 2013). Positive work outcomes and attitudes of intrinsic motivation, such as voluntary engagement at work (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Gagné & Deci, 2005), extra-role helping (Finkelstein, 2011), and strong commitment (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009), are valued by many employees and in many organizations. Therefore, employees likely associate intrinsic motivation with morality. In addition, individuals tend to associate effort with morality, regardless of whether the effort increases productivity or not (Celniker et al., 2020). Showing intrinsic motivation can thus enhance perceived morality by signaling extra commitment and dedication to the work. In sum, employees' relationship quality with others will increase their intrinsic motivation display through their desire to look moral.

**Hypothesis 2.** Employees' desire to look moral mediates the relationship between relationship quality and intrinsic motivation display.

### **4.3 Methods**

Across three studies, I test whether employees' intrinsic motivation display varies according to the quality of their relationships with their colleagues and whether their desire to look moral serves as a mediating mechanism. Study 1 is an exploratory participant concept mapping analysis that combines traditional content analysis and semantic mapping to analyze participants' qualitative responses (Behfar et al., 2008). I utilize multidimensional scaling and clustering analysis to systematically investigate why and how employees engage in intrinsic

motivation display. Study 2 is a field survey of 223 employee-supervisor dyads ( $N = 446$ ) in diverse work organizations to test the hypotheses and examine their generalizability in a real-life setting. Study 3 is a pre-registered<sup>7</sup> experiment ( $N = 303$ ) that manipulates relationship quality directly to examine the hypotheses. Study 2 also tests the effectiveness of intrinsic motivation display, by measuring whether employees' efforts to show intrinsic motivation indeed change others' perceptions of their intrinsic motivation.

### **4.3.1 Study 1**

#### **Sample and Procedure**

I aimed to recruit 100 U.S. full-time working adults who had experiences of engaging in intrinsic motivation display. I recruited all participants through Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) to go through an adapted version of a thought-listing exercise (Sumpradit, Bagozzi, & Ascione, 2015). Participants first read a short definition of intrinsic motivation (“When you have intrinsic motivation, you work for the satisfaction coming from the work itself”). I then asked participants whether they had ever tried to show their intrinsic motivation to others, in a way that (a) they showed intrinsic motivation although they did not enjoy their work in actuality, or (b) they found their work satisfactory but tried to emphasize their intrinsic motivation more. I made this distinction between participants' true and displayed intrinsic motivation clear because, in a pilot study, I found that most participants reflected on experiences they had *and* showed their intrinsic motivation when the difference was not specified. The survey immediately ended for participants who answered “no” to this question. I recruited until I had 100 total participants who answered “yes” and went through the rest of the survey.

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<sup>7</sup> [https://aspredicted.org/K5D\\_WXQ](https://aspredicted.org/K5D_WXQ)

After participants reflected on their experiences of intrinsic motivation display, they answered (a) to whom, (b) why, and (c) how they showed intrinsic motivation to others. I gave five form fields for each of these three questions and requested participants to fill in at least one field for question (a) and all five fields for questions (b) and (c). I asked participants to write freely as thoughts came up to their mind, without worrying about the grammar or trying to make complete sentences. I chose to give participants form fields instead of open essay boxes as in a typical thought-listing exercise, because my chosen analysis technique—participant concept mapping—uses sentence as the unit of analysis. After this thought-listing task, participants answered demographic questions about their age, gender, and ethnicity.

### **Study 1: Results**

Average age of the participants was 38.73 ( $SD = 10.02$ ). 49% of the participants identified themselves as female; 88% identified their ethnicity as white. I continued to recruit until I had 100 participants who completed the whole survey. 102 responses were collected in total, and the survey immediately ended for 44 participants who mentioned that they had never engaged in intrinsic motivation display. The response rate of 102 out of 146 participants (69.86%) here indicates that about two thirds of the participants answered that they had engaged in intrinsic motivation display. This ratio shows that intrinsic motivation display is frequent at work, with many participants having no difficulty reflecting on their experiences of intrinsic motivation display. After collecting the responses, I excluded 12 responses from participants who wrote random scripts (e.g., “well,” “good”) to the open-ended questions. This gave me 90 responses to analyze.

To analyze participants’ responses using participant concept mapping, I randomly selected 30 out of the 90 responses. I had several reasons to reduce the number of responses to a

small number. First, having too many responses would decrease the analysis quality because participant concept mapping requires a separate set of participants to read all responses collected in the sentence collection round and detect similarity among them. Having 30 participants already gave 300 sentence responses to analyze and I concluded that including more answers would only increase fatigue of the second set of participants and decrease the level of similarity detected below a meaningful level. Second, my goal was to find the reasons and the methods of intrinsic motivation display that most participants shared. Analyzing all 90 responses (and 900 sentences they include) could capture unique responses that only a small fraction of participants mentioned, but finding out such responses would not contribute to my goal.

I first used simple counting method to analyze participants' responses about the audience of intrinsic motivation display. I excluded answers from 9 out of 30 participants who wrote down the audience's name (e.g., "Jake," "Julia") instead of their relationship with the audience. Among the 21 participants who provided specific relationships, 18 explicitly mentioned that they displayed intrinsic motivation to a supervisor, manager, or boss. Two additional participants also mentioned an evaluator ("clients," "students"). Therefore, 95.24% of the participants mentioned their supervisor or evaluator as the audience of intrinsic motivation display. 11 participants mentioned a coworker or colleague. These results show that the most typical audiences of intrinsic motivation display are supervisors and coworkers. Four participants mentioned a subordinate or a mentee; four participants mentioned a friend or a family member. Interestingly, three participants answered that they engaged in intrinsic motivation display toward themselves, even though the question explicitly asked about their experiences of showing intrinsic motivation to "others." This result indicates that participants can engage in intrinsic motivation toward the self in a similar way they did it toward others.

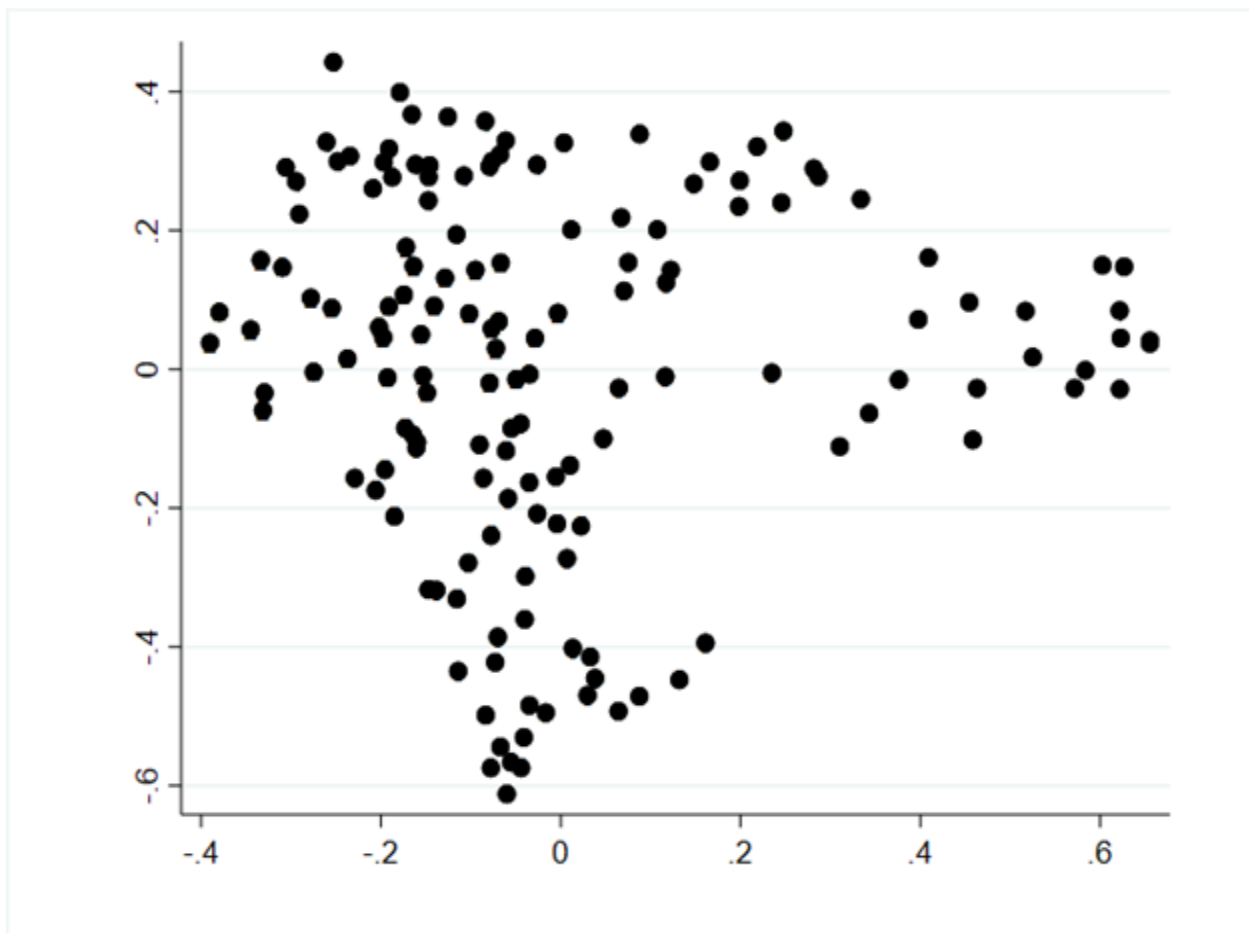
To analyze participants' qualitative responses about the reasons and the methods of intrinsic motivation display, I utilized participant concept mapping as in Behfar et al. (2008) (Behfar et al., 2008). This method analyzes underlying dimensions in participants' qualitative responses to find groups, or clusters, of similar answers. The analysis involves five steps: (a) converting participants' responses into sentences, (b) participant sorting of sentences into groups, (c) multidimensional scaling analysis, (d) clustering analysis, and (e) cluster labeling (Behfar et al., 2008). I followed the same five steps separately for participants' answers on why they engaged in intrinsic motivation display (the "why" question) and on how they did it (the "how" question). Because I already asked participants to write sentences in form fields in the survey, I skipped step (a) above and proceeded with participants' original answers to step (b). I had 150 sentences for each of the two questions because 30 participants provided 5 sentences each.

In step (b), I recruited another set of 30 participants from Prolific to categorize the sentences into groups. Participants' job was to read all 150 sentences and to sort sentences with similar ideas into piles. Using an online software (Proven By Users), I presented participants 150 cards with one of 150 sentences on each of them, and participants dragged and dropped the cards to sort them. Participants could create and name as many groups as they would like. Following Behfar et al. (Behfar et al., 2008), I asked participants not to create a "Miscellaneous" group; I asked them to put any card that did not belong to any group into its own pile.

Once sorting was done, I proceeded to step (c) and created a  $150 \times 150$  binary square matrix for each participant. The rows and columns of this matrix were the 150 sentences, and cell  $[i, j]$  had a value of 1 when the participant grouped two sentences  $i$  and  $j$  into the same pile and 0 when the sentences were in different piles. Aggregating these binary matrices of 30 participants resulted in a  $150 \times 150$  square matrix with a minimum possible cell value of 0 (no participant

grouped the two sentences together into the same pile) and a maximum possible cell value of 30 (all participants grouped the two sentences into the same pile). I used this matrix to run classical multidimensional scaling analysis (i.e., principal coordinates analysis) and obtained each sentence's coordinate on a two-dimensional space. Figure 4-1 shows the sentences plotted according to their coordinates. The distance between any pair of sentences represents similarity. The closer the two sentences are, the more similar they are to each other based on participants' grouping.

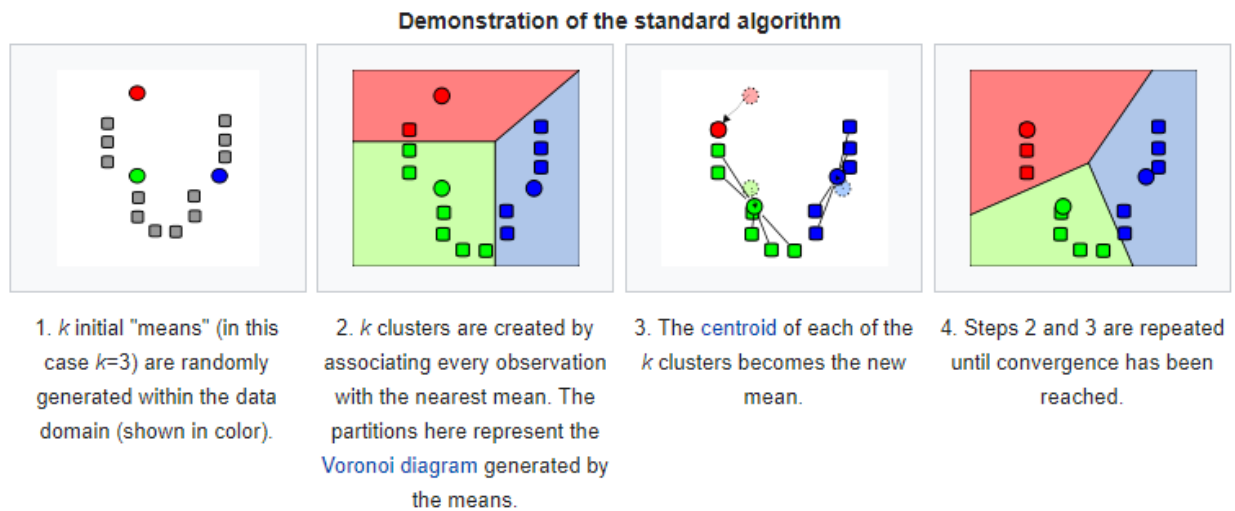
*Figure 4-1.  
Study 1: Scatterplot of Intrinsic Motivation Display Reasons*



In step (d), I ran a *k*-means clustering analysis to detect groups, or clusters, of similar sentences based on their coordinates on the two-dimensional space. For each prespecified

number of clusters  $k$ , this algorithm randomly selects  $k$  observations as centers of  $k$  clusters. The algorithm then calculates the Euclidean distance between each observation and the  $k$  centers, and assigns the observation to its closest center. After this procedure, the centroid of all observations assigned to each cluster becomes the new center of the cluster. In the next round, the algorithm reassigns all observations to their new centers again based on the Euclidean distance. The algorithm reiterates the process until no observation is assigned to a new center. Figure 4-2 summarizes the process. Figure 4-3 shows the within sum of variance (WSS), calculated by summing up the variance from each observation to its cluster's centroid, logged WSS, eta-squared (proportion of total variance explained by clustering), and PRE (increase in the explained variance as the number of clusters increases). Based on these four graphs, I determined the optimal number of clusters to be six for the reasons of intrinsic motivation display (the "why" question) and to be 12 for its methods (the "how" question).

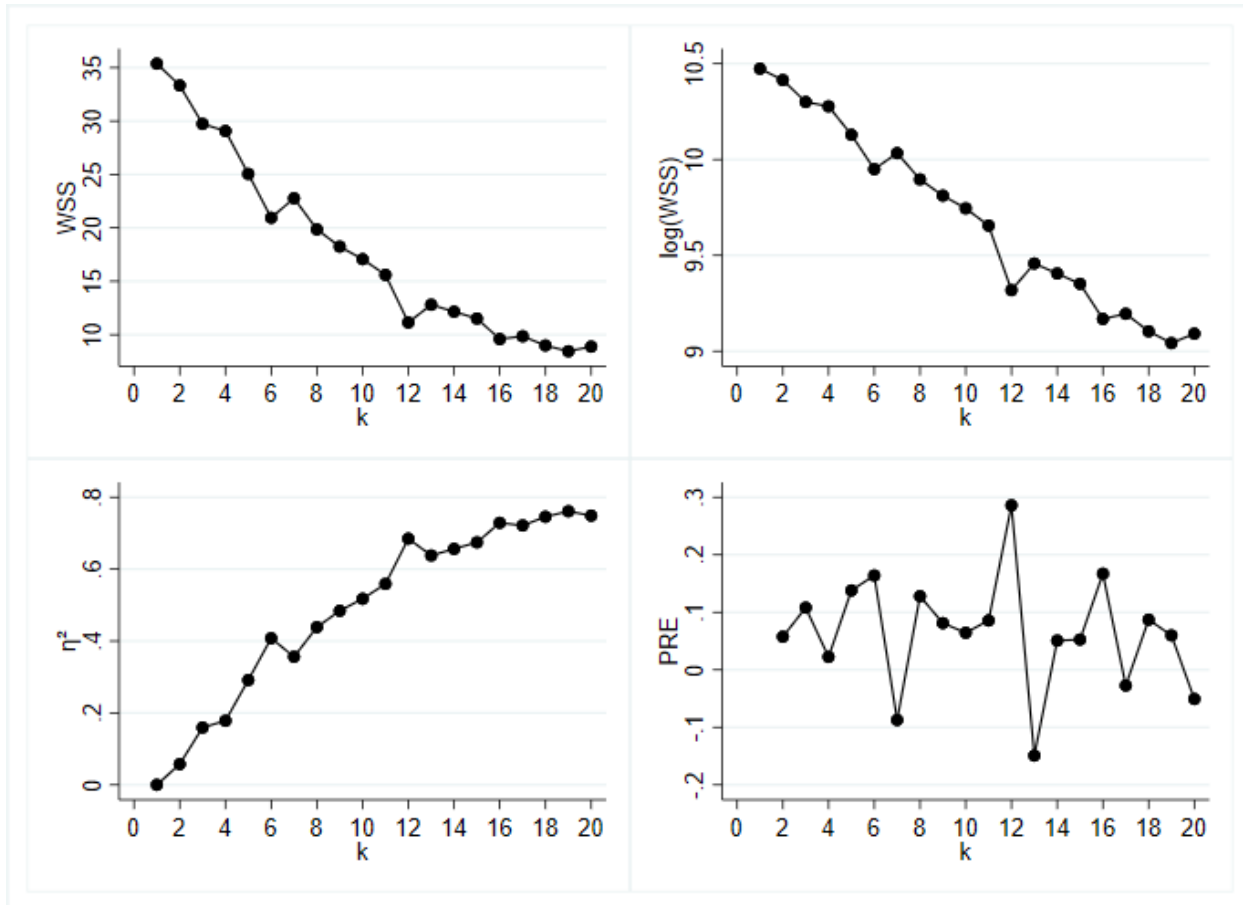
Figure 4-2. Study 1:  $k$ -means Clustering Algorithm



Source: Wikipedia ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/K-means\\_clustering](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/K-means_clustering))



Figure 4-3.  
 Study 1: Clustering Analysis Results of Intrinsic Motivation Display Reasons



Finally, in step (e), I read all sentences assigned to each cluster and labeled it. Figure 4 shows participants’ answers to the reasons they engaged in intrinsic motivation display in six clusters. Based on the contents of sentences assigned, I named the clusters for the “why” question: external reward (19 sentences), showing and encouraging good work ethic (34 sentences), recognition from supervisor (20 sentences), recognition from coworkers (27 sentences), motivating oneself (29 sentences), and genuine display (21 sentences). Table 4-1 shows the six clusters with sample sentences. As shown in the table, participants believed that intrinsic motivation display could bring reward and recognition from others. Further, the largest cluster I found on work ethic demonstrates why, again, participants thought that intrinsic

motivation display would bring rewards; it demonstrated commitment, dedication, and good work attitude in general. These results show that intrinsic motivation display not just creates an image of sociable and competent employee but demonstrates a moral image of trustworthy, reliable, and respectful worker.

In addition to the clusters, I also named the two axes based on the clusters and sentences included. Specifically, I named the horizontal axis internal-external (the extent to which participants expected to receive rewards internal or external to the self) and the vertical axis self- and other-oriented (the extent to which participants' reasons to engage in intrinsic motivation display were about the self or others). Participants mentioned a variety of rewards internal to themselves, such as encouraging good work ethic and motivating oneself, while they provided only a few answers about self-oriented reasons for external rewards (e.g., to reward themselves).

Figure 4-4. Study 1: Scatterplot of Intrinsic Motivation Display Reasons

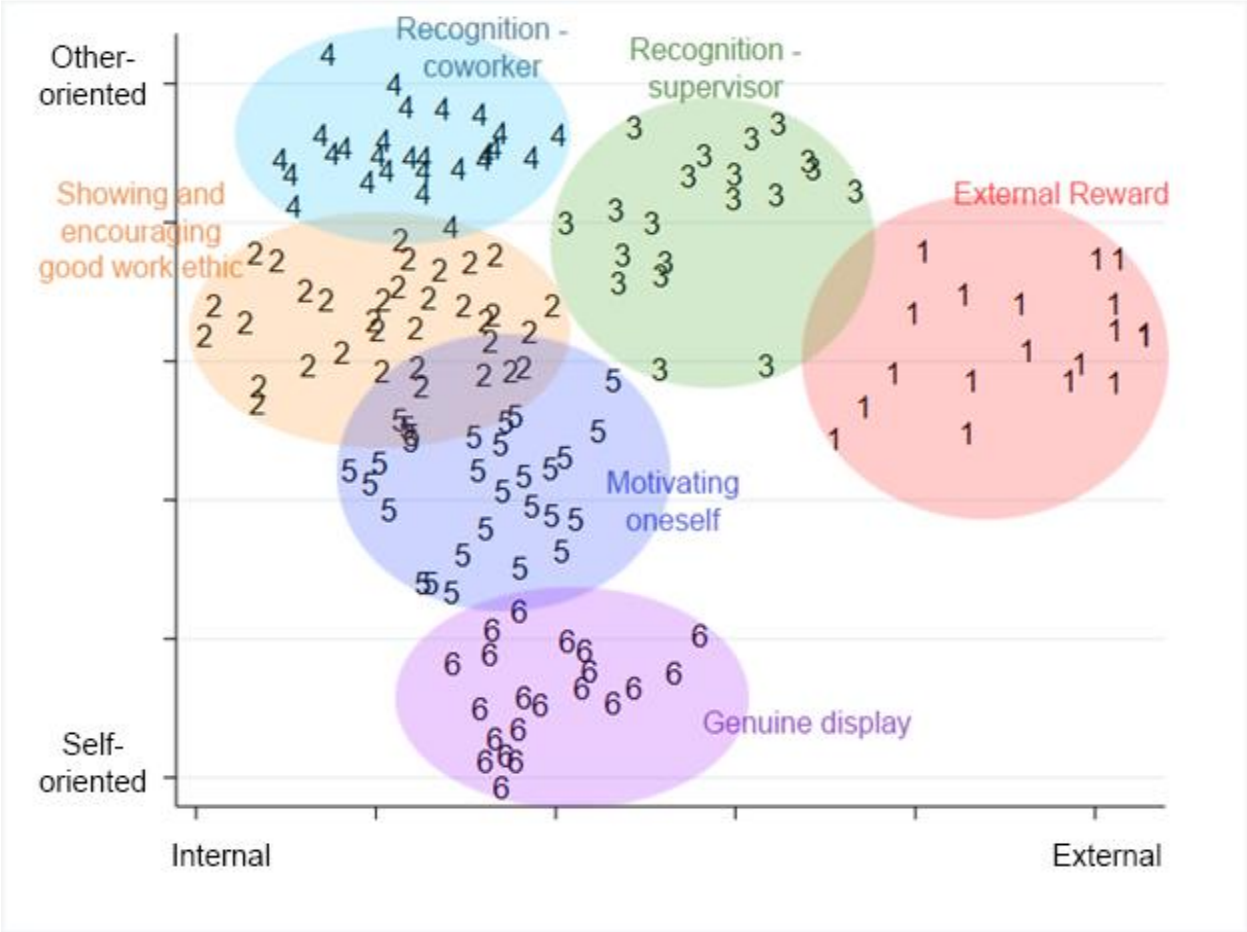


Table 4-1. Study 1: Clustering Analysis Results of Intrinsic Motivation Display Reasons

Cluster No.	Examples
1. External reward (19 sentences)	I wanted a raise
	I wanted a promotion
	mostly for the paycheck
	job security
	leave early
2. Showing and encouraging good work ethic (34 sentences)	I wanted to create an aura of trusting.
	To show I have good work ethic
	I wanted to show I had a good attitude
	To motivate others

3. Recognition – supervisor (20 sentences)	Respect from upper management
	To be noticed by my superiors
	To look driven in front of the manager
	Its [sic] required by the company to smile, actually.
	to show management I am qualified for the job
4. Recognition – coworker (27 sentences)	I wanted to create a good impression that I cared about my work.
	I wanted my co-workers to think I was smart
	For respect from coworkers
	to show I am part of the team
	I wanted my co-workers to like me
5. Motivating oneself (29 sentences)	Create a positive work environment
	to improve morale
	I wanted to foster gratitude within myself
	I generally want to be pleasant at work.
	Working for the sake of work also makes the time go by faster.
6. Genuine display (21 sentences)	To express that I love what I do
	i [sic] wanted to be proud of myself
	Because I legitimately enjoy my job
	I wanted to just enjoy my work.
	Have a sense of duty

Because the graphs in Figure 3 showed another drop in WSS when the number of clusters was 12 for the “how” question, I analyzed how the grouping varied with 12 clusters instead of six. Figure 4-5 shows circles added over the original shaded regions in Figure 4-4 to indicate additional clusters. Each of the six clusters in Figure 4-4 divided into two clusters in Figure 4-5. Some additional clusters did not add much new information. For example, the external reward cluster split into money and promotion (14 sentences) and achieving high performance (9 sentences). Others, however, showed interesting dynamics inside the cluster. The work ethic cluster included showing work ethic and reliability of oneself (13 sentences) and motivating others (13 sentences), indicating that encouraging others could be an important part of good

work ethic. Interestingly, the recognition – coworker cluster split into looking smart and likable (14 sentences) and looking dedicated and hardworking (21 sentences), distinguishing morality concerns from warmth and competence concerns. Table 4-2 shows the names of clusters with examples. Overall, work ethic remained as the largest cluster, and morality concerns were also mentioned in other clusters besides the work ethic cluster.

Figure 4-5.  
Study 1: Additional Scatterplot of Intrinsic Motivation Display Reasons

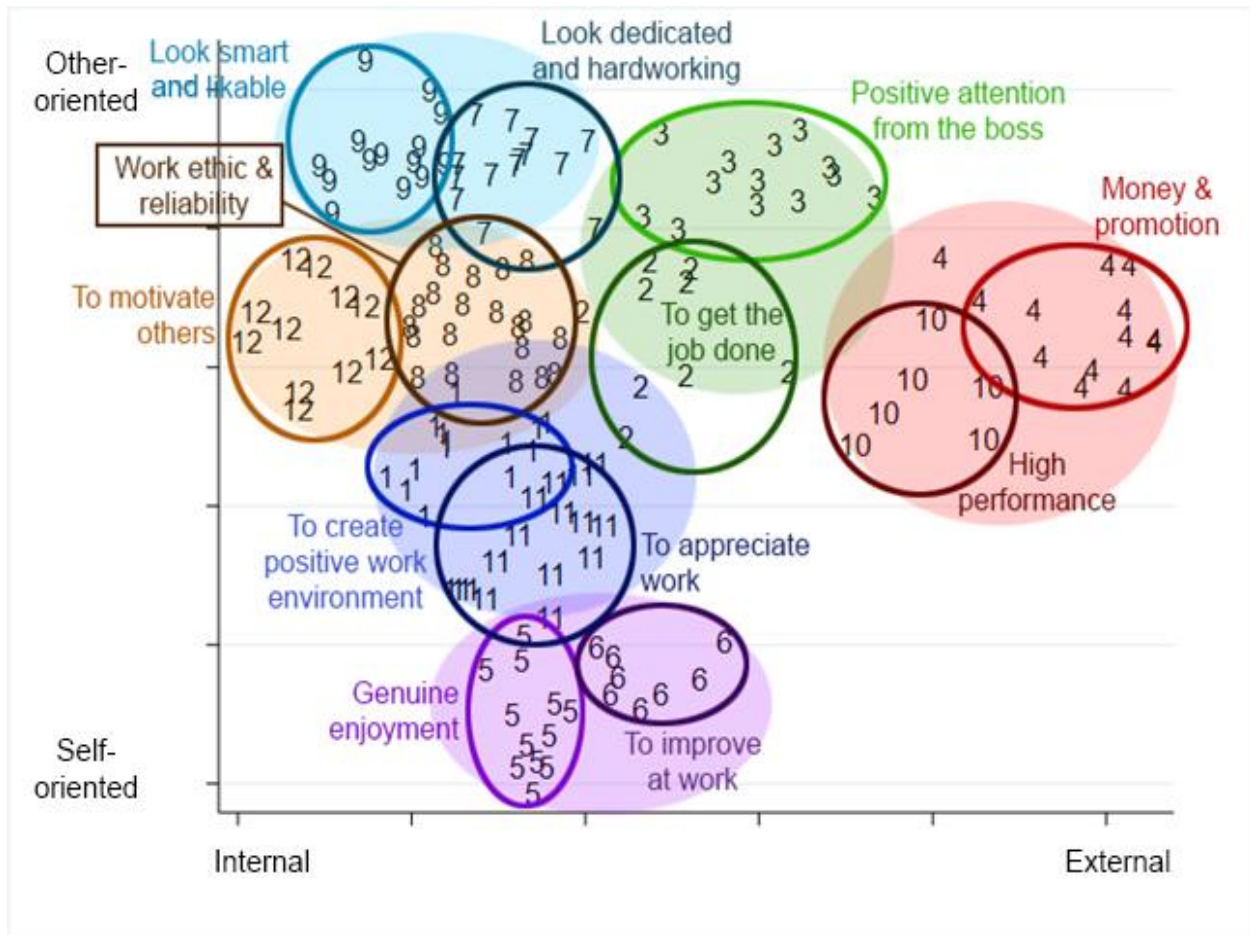


Table 4-2.  
Study 1: Additional Clustering Analysis Results of Intrinsic Motivation Display Reasons

Cluster	Examples
1. To create positive work	prove that work isn't always awful
	Create a positive work environment

environment (14)	To show the work is rewarding
2. To get the job done (9)	to make sure they mostly leave me alone at work
	Its required by the company to smile, actually.
3. Positive attention from the boss (13)	To be noticed by my superiors
	To look driven in front of the manager
4. Money & promotion (13)	I wanted a promotion
	mostly for the paycheck
5. Genuine enjoyment (12)	I take pleasure in my work
	Because I legitimately enjoy my job
6. To improve at work (8)	It makes me stronger.
	to improve
7. Look dedicated and hardworking (14)	I wanted to prove that I was a committed worker.
	I want to seem dedicated.
	so they know that I am a good worker
8. Work ethic & reliability (21)	To prove i'm [sic] not lazy.
	I wanted to show I had a good attitude
	An image of reliability.
	I wanted to create an aura of trusting.
9. Look smart and likable (14)	to appear smart
	I wanted my co-workers to like me
	For respect from coworkers
10. High performance (6)	To achieve high performance
	To achieve high accuracy rate
11. To appreciate work (15)	By working hard in a demonstrative way, I avoid boredom.
	to convince myself
	I wanted to foster gratitude within myself
12. To motivate others (11)	I wanted my coworkers to work harder.
	I wanted to show them it was easy and they can do it

Although I did not provide specific predictions for the methods of intrinsic motivation display, I examined how participants communicated their intrinsic motivation to others out of curiosity. Figure 4-6 shows the results of clustering analysis for participants' answers about how they engaged in intrinsic motivation display. Based on the graphs in Figure 4-6, I chose 12 as the

appropriate number of clusters. The clusters are depicted in Figure 4-7. Table 4-3 shows the clusters with sample sentences. As I did for the answers to the “why” question, I named the axes explicit-implicit (the extent to which participants engaged in behaviors visible or unobservable to others) and self- and other-oriented (the extent to which participants’ behaviors were toward the self or others). Participants engaged in behaviors in all four quadrants relatively evenly. Specifically, participants answered that they explicitly expressed their enjoyment at work, whether true or not, to display intrinsic motivation (29 sentences in two clusters). They further tried to show typical outcomes of intrinsic motivation in order to prove it, such as helping (19 sentences) and sharing information (8 sentences).

Participants also answered that they worked on extra tasks and for extra hours to display intrinsic motivation (28 sentences in two clusters). Two clusters further showed that intrinsic motivation display frequently involved emotional regulation, by hiding negativity (13 sentences) and by showing positive emotions at work (12 sentences). However, not many participants mentioned that they publicized their effort to work on extra tasks (5 sentences). Instead, they seemed to believe that working hard (14 sentences) and well (13 sentences) would naturally show their intrinsic motivation. This tendency, combined with the fact that fewer than 30% of the participants directly expressed intrinsic motivation to others, raises a question about whether others would actually notice employees’ intrinsic motivation display. That is, audience may not recognize employees’ behavioral efforts to show intrinsic motivation even though it involves significant costs to engage in extra work, regulate emotions, and even accept supervisors’ questionable decisions (9 sentences). I address this point again as I test the effectiveness of intrinsic motivation display in Study 2.

Figure 4-6.  
 Study 1: Clustering Analysis Results of Intrinsic Motivation Display Methods

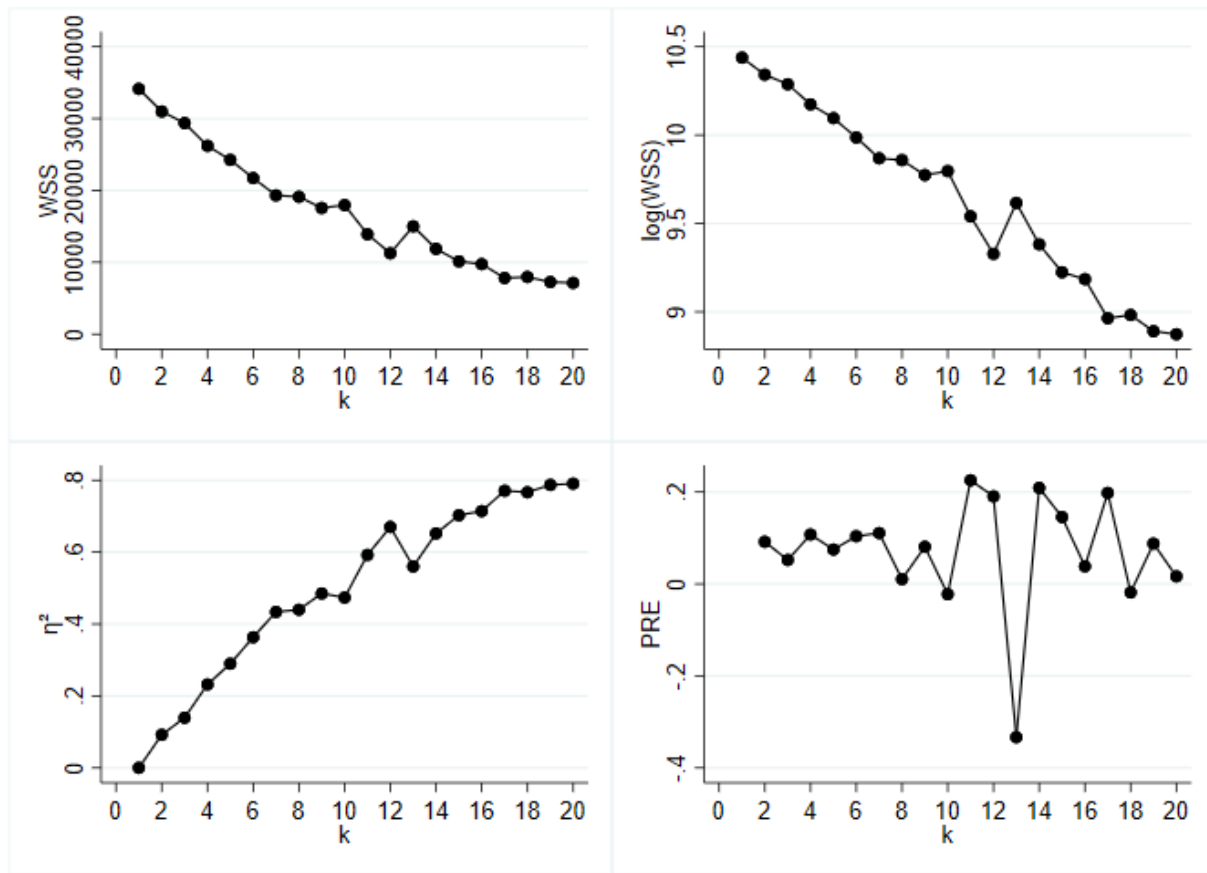




Figure 4-7. Study 1: Scatterplot of Intrinsic Motivation Display Methods

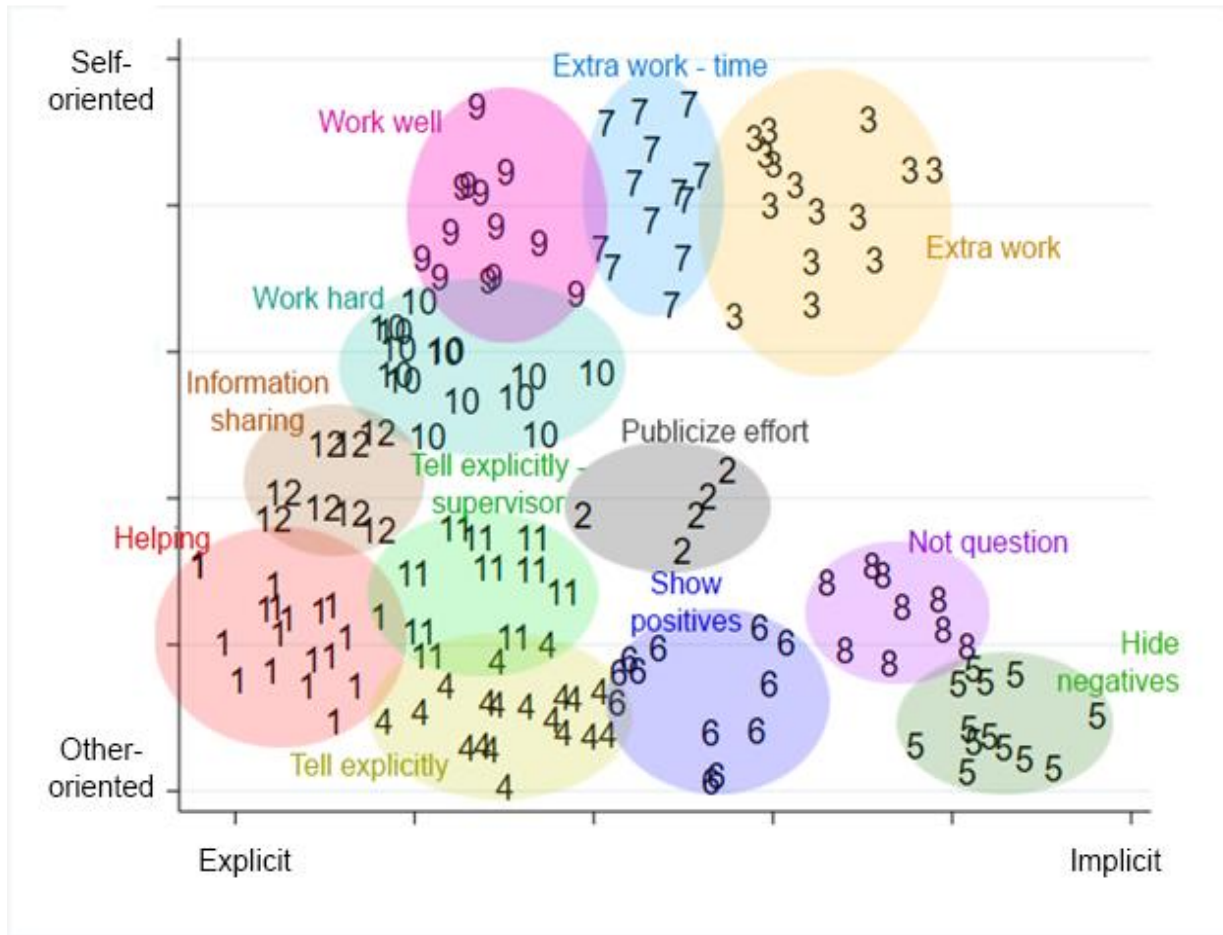


Table 4-3.  
Study 1: Clustering Analysis Results of Intrinsic Motivation Display Methods

Cluster	Examples
1. Helping (19 sentences)	help others when they are struggling
	I offer suggestions that might make others' jobs easier.
	listen to others and offer advice about making the most of their work day
2. Publicize effort (5 sentences)	I actively show a delight in the amount of work that I have and do
3. Extra work (15 sentences)	I do more work than is required.
	I took less breaks.
	volunteering for extra work tasks
4. Tell explicitly (19 sentences)	By telling them how much fun I was having
	Try and be positive when talking about work
	tell them how happy it makes me

5. Hide negatives (13 sentences)	I mostly hid negative feelings
	I tried to act more positive and happy than I felt.
	fake a smile and body language
6. Show positives (12 sentences)	I tried to keep a smile on my face, to project that enjoyment outwards.
	Telling my manager it was going great
7. Extra work – time (13 sentences)	I worked faster
	staying late
	I took on jobs that others did not want to do, to take my own responsibilities.
8. Not question (9 sentences)	I would not complain
	I would not question the decision of the Supervisors.
9. Work well (13 sentences)	I completed every deadline.
	Learning to work efficiently
	I come in early in the morning.
10. Work hard (14 sentences)	I tried to learn as much as I could about topics
	I kept my area really spotless.
	Gain knowledge of internal systems
11. Explicitly tell – supervisor (10 sentences)	I made mention to my superiors that I am very satisfied by my work.
	When I was cleaning I would go talk to head people in the company.
12. Information sharing (8 sentences)	I go the extra mile when providing information to others asking questions.
	I offered ideas and ways to fix problems

### **Study 1: Discussion**

Study 1 provides initial evidence that employees frequently engage in intrinsic motivation display. Supervisors and coworkers are the major audience, and moral concerns are central in employees' intrinsic motivation display, as evidenced by many participants (at least 34 sentences) mentioning showing work ethic, dedication, and reliability as the core reasons of intrinsic motivation display. Additional analysis on the methods of intrinsic motivation display reveals that it involves employees' significant effort to go above and beyond at work. However, employees do not realize the necessity of publicize this effort because they seem to believe that their intrinsic motivation would be naturally shown in hardworking. In Study 2, I measure

intrinsic motivation display quantitatively and examine the effects of its hypothesized antecedent (relationship quality) and mediator (employees' desire to look moral).

### 4.3.2 Study 2

#### **Sample and Procedure**

*Sample.* The sample consists of 446 full-time working adults in 223 leader-follower dyads. Undergraduate students taking introductory management course at a public university in Midwest referred a full-time employee they knew of for a course credit, and the employee again referred their supervisor to participate in the study. Each dyad thus consisted of a focal employee and the employee's supervisor. Different dyads were coming from different work organizations. Focal employees and supervisors received a different set of surveys. Focal employees indicated their true intrinsic motivation to work, their relationships with the supervisor, their desire to look moral to the supervisor, and the level of intrinsic motivation they would like to show to the supervisor. Supervisors rated their relationships with focal employees and focal employees' intrinsic motivation as they perceived it. All participants completed a Qualtrics survey using their own computers.

284 focal employees and 276 supervisors completed the survey in total, and we could match 223 dyads. Employees in the dropped sample did not have significantly different levels of intrinsic motivation ( $p = .448$ ) or relationship quality with the supervisor ( $p = .288$ ) from those of employees in the matched sample. Supervisors in the dropped sample rated their relationship with the focal employees significantly less positively compared to supervisors in the matched sample did ( $M = 3.94$  vs.  $M = 4.14$ ,  $p = .008$ ). The result indicates that supervisors were less likely to rate their relationships with focal employees as positive for employees who referred the supervisors but did not complete the survey themselves. Supervisors did not know whether the

employees completed the survey or not, but the mismatch in answering surveys might suggest something negative was going on in the relationships between the employees and their supervisors.

**Measures. Intrinsic motivation.** I measured focal employees' *true intrinsic motivation* and *intrinsic motivation display* using the Situational Motivation Scale (SIMS) scale on intrinsic motivation (Grant, 2008; Guay et al., 2000). After a prompt, "I am motivated to work..." focal employees rated their agreement with each of the following four statements on the scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree): (a) "because I enjoy the work itself" (b) "because it's fun" (c) "because I find the work engaging" and (d) "because I enjoy it." For intrinsic motivation display, the prompt was "To my supervisor, I would indicate that I work..." Supervisors answered *perceived intrinsic motivation* of focal employees using the same SIMS scale, after the prompt "In my opinion, I think [name of focal employee] works..."

**Relationship quality.** To measure relationship quality between focal employees and their supervisors, I used *Leader-Member Exchange (LMX)*. LMX captures mutual trust, respect, and reciprocity in leader-member relationships (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The measure was included in both focal employees' and supervisors' surveys. I used 5 items from the original 7-item LMX scale in Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995), following previous studies using the same shortened measure when survey length was a concern (Burriss, Detert, & Chiaburu, 2008; Raghuram, Gajendran, Liu, & Somaya, 2017). Focal employees answered the following items on a 5-point Likert scale: "Do you know where you stand with your leader; do you usually know how satisfied your leader is with what you do?" "How well does your leader understand your job problems and needs?" "Regardless of how much formal authority he/she has built into his/her position, what are the chances that your leader would use his/her power to help you solve

problems in your work?” “Again, regardless of the amount of formal authority your leader has, what are the chances that he/she would “bail you out,” at his/her expense?” and “How would you characterize your working relationship with your leader?” Supervisors answered the same 5-item LMX scale with appropriate wording changes in the original paper.

**Desire to look moral.** I measured focal employees’ *desire to look moral* using the 5-item moral traits from Tappin and McKay (2019). After a prompt, “When I communicate with my supervisor, I try to look...” employees rated each of the following five traits on a 7-point scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree): honest, trustworthy, fair, respectful, and principled.

**Control variables.** My theory draws on theories of impression management, but I expected intrinsic motivation display to be distinguished from employees’ general impression management and controlled for it. I measured *impression management motives* of focal employees using the 6-item measure adapted from Allen and Rush (1998). After a prompt (“When I communicate with my supervisor, I try to...”), focal employees answered the following six items on a 7-point scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree): “enhance my image (e.g., to make my supervisor believe that I am a helpful employee),” “build up favors for a later exchange,” “show-off my expertise,” “capture my supervisor’s attention on me,” “obtain recognition or other organizational rewards,” and “seek the spotlight.”

## **Study 2: Results**

Table 4-4 shows means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlations. Interestingly, employees’ true intrinsic motivation ( $M = 5.75, SD = .82$ ) was not significantly different from their intrinsic motivation displayed to the supervisor ( $M = 5.78, SD = .93$ ). The insignificant difference is likely due to the high levels of intrinsic motivation reported by these employees.

That is, the higher employees self-reported intrinsic motivation is, the smaller there is room for employees to show even higher intrinsic motivation. Indeed, employees' true intrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation display were highly correlated ( $r = .650, p < .001$ ). I found a significant, but quite modest, and positive correlation between LMX reported by focal employees and their supervisors ( $r = .254, p < .001$ ).

*Table 4-4. Study 2: Means, Standard Deviations, Zero-Order Pairwise Correlations*

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. Intrinsic motivation display	5.76	.82					
2. LMX (focal employee)	3.95	.72	.35***				
3. LMX (supervisor)	4.14	.54	.28***	.25***			
4. True intrinsic motivation	5.78	.93	.65***	.33***	.22***		
5. Desire to look moral	6.34	.71	.25***	.17*	.16*	.19**	
6. Impression management motives	4.05	1.16	-.13	-.02	.02	-.22***	-.03

$N=221$ , \*:  $p < .05$ ; \*\*:  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*:  $p < .001$

Table 4-5 reports the results of regression analyses to test Hypothesis 1 on the main effect of relationship quality on employees' intrinsic motivation display. Multicollinearity was not a concern as the average VIFs were smaller than 1.14 in all models. Model 2 shows that LMX was significantly and positively associated with employees' intrinsic motivation display, either when LMX was measured by focal employees ( $b = .175, SD = .061, p = .004$ ) or supervisors ( $b = .217, SD = .079, p = .007$ ). Both measures of LMX predicted employees' intrinsic motivation display significantly and positively after controlling for employees' true intrinsic motivation. Impression management motives did not have a significant effect in any of the models. Models 1 through 4 thus support Hypothesis 1. When employees' desire to look moral was entered to the models (Models through 5-8), the variable significantly predicted intrinsic motivation display in all models ( $b > .131, p < .030$ ), suggesting potential mediation.

Table 4-5. Study 2: Results of Regression Analyses on Intrinsic Motivation Display

Predictors	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
LMX (focal employees)		.18** (.06)		.15* (.06)
LMX (supervisors)			.22** (.08)	.18* (.08)
Impression management motives	.01 (.04)	.01 (.04)	.01 (.04)	.00 (.04)
True intrinsic motivation	.58*** (.05)	.54*** (.05)	.55*** (.05)	.52*** (.05)
Constant	2.33*** (.34)	1.94*** (.36)	1.64*** (.42)	1.42** (.43)
Observations	223	223	221	221
R-squared	.42	.44	.44	.46

Predictors	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
LMX (focal employees)		.16** (.06)		.14* (.06)
LMX (supervisors)			.19* (.08)	.16* (.08)
Desire to look moral	.16** (.01)	.14* (.06)	.14* (.06)	.13* (.06)
Impression management motives	.01 (.04)	.01 (.04)	.01 (.04)	.00 (.04)
True intrinsic motivation	.56*** (.05)	.52*** (.05)	.53*** (.05)	.50*** (.05)
Constant	1.48*** (.47)	1.21* (.47)	.94+ (.51)	.80 (.51)
Observations	223	223	221	221
R-squared	.44	.46	.46	.47

Standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$ , +  $p < .10$

I ran mediation analyses using the *sem* command in STATA 14.0 MP to test Hypothesis 2 on the mediating role of employees' desire to look moral. Table 4-6 reports the results of these analyses. As expected in Hypothesis 2, focal employees' desire to look moral significantly and positively mediated the relationship between LMX and employees' intrinsic motivation indicated to their supervisors. Based on bootstrap with 10,000 random samples, the bias-corrected CIs of the indirect effect was .038 [-.004, .080] with  $p = .038$  for LMX reported by focal employees

and .047 [.001, .106] with  $p = .047$  for supervisor-reported LMX. These results partially support Hypothesis 2 on the mediating role of morality; the mediation was marginally significant for employee-rated LMX and was significant for supervisor-rated LMX.

*Table 4-6. Study 2: Results of Mediation Analyses*

Independent variable: LMX	Results
<i>Employee-rated LMX</i>	
The direct effect of LMX on desire to look moral	$b=.162, SE=.067, z=2.40, p=.016$
The direct effect of LMX on intrinsic motivation display	$b=.362, SE=.082, z=4.44, p<.001$
The indirect effect of LMX on intrinsic motivation display through desire to look moral	.038 (95% CI [-.004, .080])
<i>Supervisor-rated LMX</i>	
The direct effect of LMX on desire to look moral	$b=.210, SE=.108, z=1.94, p=.053$
The direct effect of LMX on intrinsic motivation display	$b=.374, SE=.099, z=3.79, p<.001$
The indirect effect of LMX on intrinsic motivation display through desire to look moral	.047 (95% CI [.001, .106])

$N = 221$  for employee-rated LMX;  $N = 223$  for supervisor-rated LMX.

As a post-hoc analysis, I tested whether employees' intrinsic motivation display was effective, i.e., whether it affected supervisors' perceptions of employee intrinsic motivation. Surprisingly, the correlation between employees' intrinsic motivation display and supervisor-rated intrinsic motivation of employees was only .196. The correlation was significant at  $\alpha = .01$  level but not at  $\alpha = .001$  level. The correlation was far lower than the correlation between employees' true intrinsic motivation and supervisor-rated intrinsic motivation ( $r = .327$ ). These results suggest that intrinsic motivation display was not very effective; further, supervisors were not good at noticing employees' intrinsic motivation in general, whether being true or displayed.

### **Study 2: Discussion**

Study 2 shows that relationship quality significantly predicts intrinsic motivation display in work settings. The effect was significant after controlling for employees' general impression management motives and even for their true intrinsic motivation. Further, employees' desire to look moral mediated the relationship between relationship quality and intrinsic motivation



display. That is, employees wanted to look moral to their supervisors with whom they had better relationships, which in turn led to their efforts to show intrinsic motivation.

The additional results of the post-hoc analysis about the effectiveness of intrinsic motivation display suggests an interesting dynamic. In Study 1, we found initial evidence that employees' intrinsic motivation display might not be successful because most employees believed that their intrinsic motivation would be naturally shown even when they did not make any explicit remarks on it. The results of Study 2 disprove this belief. Supervisors only marginally noticed employees' intrinsic motivation display, and they were not good at guessing the levels of employees' intrinsic motivation in general. Thus, while employees frequently engaged in intrinsic motivation display in a belief that it would bring reward and recognition to them, employees were not very good at creating the desired impressions.

### *4.3.3 Study 3*

#### **Sample and Procedure**

In Study 3, I aimed to recruit 300 participants on Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) through the CloudResearch platform (<https://www.cloudresearch.com/>). I ended up recruiting 303 participants in the process of removing low-quality responses. The exact exclusion rules are specified in the pre-registration ([https://aspredicted.org/K5D\\_WXQ](https://aspredicted.org/K5D_WXQ)). Participants first read a cover story that the goal of the study was to test the effectiveness of working with partners on creating an online resume. The cover story stated that participants would first follow a series of questions to create an online resume for another job similar to their current job, and that they would meet with their matched partner to read and give feedback on each other's resume. After participants read the cover story, they rated their true intrinsic motivation to engage in the task using the same 4-item SIMS scale in Study 2. Participants then watched a standard loading

screen for 7 seconds before the screen showed that they were matched with a partner. In actuality, the partner did not exist.

Once participants had their partners, they were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. In the first condition (intimacy condition), participants answered three questions out of “36 questions for building closeness” (Aron, Melinat, Aron, Vallone, & Bator, 1997). These questions were specifically developed to increase interpersonal closeness. I randomly selected three questions in Set I of the questionnaire: (a) What would constitute a “perfect” day for you? (b) For what in your life do you feel most grateful? and (c) If you could wake up tomorrow having gained any one quality or ability, what would it be? After participants answered the three questions, they saw their partner’s answers to the same set of questions. In actuality, I obtained these answers from other MTurk participants during the pilot<sup>8</sup>. In the second condition (control condition), participants proceeded to the next step right after they were matched.

Participants rated their perceived intimacy with their partner based on the 4-item intimacy scale used in interpersonal relationships in organizational settings (Dumas, Phillips, & Rothbard, 2013). After a prompt “Thinking about this person, I...” participants answered the following items: (a) feel close to this person (b) could count on this person (c) could get help from this person, and (d) feel a sense of caring for each other. After rating intimacy, participants rated their desire to look moral to their partner. After a prompt “To this person, I want to look...” participants answered to the following five items from Abele et al. (2016): (a) fair (b) just (c) considerate (d) trustworthy, and (e) reliable. All items were on a 7-point scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree).

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<sup>8</sup> The answers for these three questions were: (a) “To spend the entire day with my family. Whether it's going out to eat, or to the movies or mall. Or having a home-cooked meal together and watching movies.” (b) “I feel most grateful for my health, I am able to physically move around just fine with no pain.” and (c) “I would wish to be more of a risk-taker. I think it would enrich my life and add new experiences.”

Participants then followed a series of five questions to create their online resume. These questions were: (a) What are your previous experiences with this job? (b) Do you have any certificates, licenses, or educational backgrounds specific to this job? (c) What are your strengths? (max. 2 sentences) (d) Click some soft skills you have below: (participants selected from the following given options: Teamwork, communication, creativity, work ethic, problem-solving, attention to detail, time management, leadership, & adaptability), and (e) Why are you motivated to do this work? I showed a standard resume being filled with participants' answers as they typed their answered to each of the questions. See Figure 4-8 for an example. Finally, using the same SIMS scale, participants answered how much intrinsic motivation they would like to indicate to their partner. After providing this information, participants answered demographic questions and were immediately directed to the debrief screen that explained the true purpose of the study.

*Figure 4-8. Study 3: Resume Building Example*



**M | MICHIGAN ROSS**

Imagine you are applying for [a similar job to your current job](#) at a different organization.

**[Q1/5] What are your previous experiences with this job? (max. 2 sentences)**


I manage several projects for clients. I answer their questions and make sure that any issues that they have are answered.

→

Powered by Qualtrics

**M | MICHIGAN ROSS**

Your current resume:




**Previous Experiences:**  
I manage several projects for clients. I answer their questions and make sure that any issues that they have are answered.

---

**[Q2/5] Do you have any certificates, licenses, or educational backgrounds specific to this job?**

→



**Previous Experiences:**  
I manage several projects for clients. I answer their questions and make sure that any issues that they have are answered.

**Certificates, Licenses, & Educational Backgrounds:**  
I have a master's degree in regulatory science

**Strengths:**  
I'm diligent and hardworking, I complete all assignments and don't mind staying late. I have a thirst for knowledge and constantly seek to improve myself.

**Soft Skills:**  
Teamwork, Work ethic, Time management, Problem-solving, Attention to detail, Adaptability

**Motivation:**  
I'm motivated to do this work because I believe that it can help people. I want to do work that makes a difference in other people's lives.

I read every response from the participants and dropped 14 responses where participants did not provide any information about their work to the first resume-building question about their previous work experiences. Additionally, I dropped seven responses where participants in the

intimacy condition checked the box that their partner’s answers looked like a bot. Dropping these responses did not change the significance of my predicted results. I report the results using the full sample to maintain consistency between the intimacy and the control conditions.

**Study 3: Results**

A pairwise *t*-test showed that the manipulation was successful; participants in the intimacy condition felt significantly more intimate with their partner ( $M = 5.02$ ) compared to participants in the control condition ( $M = 3.69, p < .001$ ). As in Study 2, participants answered that they would report higher intrinsic motivation to their partner, although the difference was not statistically significant ( $M = 5.01$  versus  $M = 4.91, p = .200$ ). Participants’ intrinsic motivation display ( $r = .299$ ) and their desire to look moral ( $r = .352$ ) were positively and significantly associated with perceived intimacy at  $\alpha = .001$  level.

To test the mediating role of participants’ desire to look moral, I tested mediation using *sem* command in STATA 14.0 MP. The results are in Table 4-7. Participants’ desire to look moral mediated the relationship between their intimacy with the partner and their intrinsic motivation display effort. I employed the bootstrap procedures to calculate the indirect effects with bias-corrected confidence intervals (CIs) based on 10,000 random samples with replacements. The indirect effect of intimacy on participants’ intrinsic motivation display through their desire to look moral was .082 [.023, .141] with  $p = .006$ . The results support both Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 about the main effect and the mediation.

*Table 4-7. Study 3: Results of Mediation Analyses*

Independent variable: Intimacy	Results
The direct effect of intimacy on desire to look moral	$b=.198, SE=.051, z=3.88, p<.001$
The direct effect of intimacy on intrinsic motivation display	$b=.222, SE=.069, z=3.22, p=.001$
The indirect effect of intimacy on intrinsic motivation display through desire to look moral	.082 (95% CI [.023, .141])

$N = 303$ .

### **Study 3: Discussion**

I found support for Hypothesis 1 on the relationship between relationship quality and intrinsic motivation display and for Hypothesis 2 on the mediating role of participants' desire to look moral. Participants engaged in significantly higher levels of intrinsic motivation display when they felt more intimate to their partner. Further, participants' desire to look moral mediated the relationship. That is, participants felt stronger needs to create moral images of themselves to more intimate others, which in turn led to their displays of higher intrinsic motivation. It is noteworthy that I found the effect of relationship quality in an experimental setting where participants only had small amount of information about their partner.

#### **4.4 Summary**

Employees' self-reported intrinsic motivation is often assumed to be an accurate representation of their true intrinsic motivation. In this study, I show that employees understand the positive valuation of intrinsic motivation at work and that they frequently exert effort to show their intrinsic motivation to others. Calling such effort *intrinsic motivation display*, I build the theory of intrinsic motivation display where employees engage in more intrinsic motivation display to others with whom they have more positive relationships. I further examine the mediating role of employees' desire to look moral, where employees believe that showing intrinsic motivation could create moral images of themselves being a committed and dedicated worker. Finally, I show that employees' intrinsic motivation display does not always increase their perceived intrinsic motivation, although it requires significant extra effort.

## **Chapter 5 Concluding Remarks**

At the core of this dissertation is the moralization of intrinsic motivation. In the theory chapter, presented a theoretical framework to explain how the valuation of intrinsic motivation at the societal, organizational, and interpersonal levels makes employees associate it with morality. I then discussed the affective and behavioral outcomes of employees' moralization of intrinsic motivation toward others and themselves. In the first empirical chapter, I showed that employees with higher intrinsic motivation engage in more prosocial behavior only toward their more intrinsically motivated teammates. In contrast, employees with lower intrinsic motivation do not consider their teammates' intrinsic motivation levels in ascertaining whether to behave prosocially. In the second empirical chapter, I found that employees try to show their intrinsic motivation to others in order to create a moral image of themselves. This dissertation provides fresh and useful insights on intrinsic motivation as it advances scholarly conversations on the negative social consequences of intrinsic motivation through moralization. I also offer practical implications for the role of business education and practice in creating, sustaining, and potentially reducing the moralization of intrinsic motivation. Below, I describe each contribution in turn.

## 5.1 Implications for Theory

The idea that people should love their work is not new. This idea tracks back to ancient times and is universal across different cultures, with references to it in sources such as the Bible<sup>9</sup> and the Analects of Confucius.<sup>10</sup> However, the idea gained popularity in the United States as intrinsic motivation and other related concepts such as passion, calling, and meaning of work received increasing scholarly and public attention as an important driver of success at work. Research has emphasized the value of intrinsic motivation as a driver of positive work attitude (Babakus et al., 2008; Grant & Berry, 2011), high work performance (Cerasoli et al., 2014), and strong commitment (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009). The positive valuation of intrinsic motivation remains significant in the managerial discourse in modern organizations (Derfler-Rozin & Pitesa, 2020). Organizational leaders openly discuss intrinsic motivation as a desirable characteristic of job candidates (Woolley & Fishbach, 2018), and they emphasize and reward it (DeVoe & Iyengar, 2004). These examples all provide evidence that the valuation of intrinsic motivation has become prevalent.

This dissertation addresses the consequences of this societal and organizational valuation of intrinsic motivation for employees. While a recent paper found that employers internalize this valuation and reward intrinsically motivated employees (Derfler-Rozin & Pitesa, 2020), its impact on employees' everyday interactions remains undertheorized. My theoretical framework of the moralization of intrinsic motivation underpins how this valuation of intrinsic motivation leads employees to moralize it and in turn shapes their social interactions. Employees who

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<sup>9</sup> "Work with all your heart" (Colossians 3:23).

<sup>10</sup> "To prefer it is better than only to know it. To delight in it is better than merely to prefer it" (Book Six, The Analects). Another translation reads: "They who know the truth are not equal to those who love it, and they who love it are not equal to those who delight in it." This one translates the ambiguous "it" in Chinese language (which can refer to anything) as "the truth."



moralize intrinsic motivation judge others and themselves based on their intrinsic motivation. They further reward those who have intrinsic motivation and punish those who do not, through evaluations, collaborations, and emotional reactions. Once moralized, therefore, intrinsic motivation is not just based on individuals' preferences for (Amabile, 1993; Touré-Tillery & Fishbach, 2014) and their relationship to their own work (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Gagné & Deci, 2005). Rather, it becomes a moral standard that individuals come to believe must be upheld. My theory thus shifts scholarly inquiry to focus on the valuation of intrinsic motivation and its consequences for employees' self-views and social interactions. This shift provides a complementary insight into the social, rather than strictly personal, influences on intrinsic motivation and their downstream impact. In doing so, this dissertation answers a scholarly call for moving away from studying the role of intrinsic motivation in a social vacuum (Chen & Gogus, 2008; Chen & Kanfer, 2006; Kanfer, Chen, & Pritchard, 2008).

This dissertation further contributes to the budding scholarly discussions on the dark side of intrinsic motivation as well. While the positive impacts of intrinsic motivation are well known, recent scholarly publications revealed that intrinsic motivation is not a panacea at work (Kim et al., 2020; Shin & Grant, 2019). Employees who like their work are often exploited because employers believe such employees are not interested in monetary rewards (Kim et al., 2020). At the same time, employees with high intrinsic motivation can be far from perfect, as they engage in tasks they enjoy at the expense of neglecting necessary tasks they do not (Shin & Grant, 2019). My model not only provides a unified theory to understand these findings based on the moralization of intrinsic motivation but also suggests a number of behavioral and affective outcomes that scholars could investigate under the framework. Employees who experience intrinsic motivation and who have come to moralize it avoid uninteresting tasks because working

on such tasks hurts their self-image; they accept exploitation in order to maintain their perceived moral superiority. Other negative intrapersonal and interpersonal outcomes of the moralization of intrinsic motivation include burnout, experiences of pride/shame, unfair performance evaluation, and refusal to collaborate, to name a few.

Most importantly, my theory shifts scholarly attention to the experiences of employees who do *not* have intrinsic motivation. In focusing on intrinsically motivated employees and their positive work experiences, previous literature did not address the experiences of employees who lack (or are perceived to lack) intrinsic motivation. The assumption was that these employees would show less of whatever attribute employees having high intrinsic motivation would exhibit (e.g., less engagement, less commitment). Focusing on interpersonal contexts, however, I directly address the relative disadvantages that employees with low intrinsic motivation likely undergo each day. My theory of the moralization of intrinsic motivation illustrates that these employees would be subject to negative moral judgments, which in turn lead to negative performance appraisals and fewer opportunities to collaborate. I further suggest that only by feigning intrinsic motivation can these employees overcome such disadvantages, which ironically can accelerate the moralization of intrinsic motivation as these employees' success at work may be attributed to their (faked) intrinsic motivation.

Studying the disproportionate impact of the moralization of intrinsic motivation on employees who lack intrinsic motivation deserves scholarly attention also because it shows one way inequality and inequity are exacerbated in modern workplace. Individuals' work motivation is heavily affected by situational factors, including family background (Ginsburg & Bronstein, 1993; Johnson et al., 2020). Children from low socioeconomic backgrounds likely lack resources to discover what they enjoy and/or may end up working at jobs that involve physical and routine

tasks as adults. On the other hand, employees from different cultures may not understand the importance of intrinsic motivation and fail to have it or display it at work. Indeed, research found that the idealization of intrinsic motivation is prevalent in the individualistic Western culture, especially among middle-class, college-educated North Americans compared with working-class individuals (Markus, 2016). Unfortunately, employees who moralize intrinsic motivation are unlikely to pay attention to these underlying reasons because they tend to care more about others violating their moral standard than about the possible reasons for such violations (Skitka et al., 2005). Therefore, employees who lack intrinsic motivation due to their backgrounds may end up receiving negative value judgments at work just because they do not understand the cultural ideal of being (or acting) an intrinsically motivated worker. The link between employees' socioeconomic and cultural background and their intrinsic motivation thus raises an important question from the diversity and inclusion standpoint and is worth further investigation.

The empirical results of Chapter 3 provide an example of this dark side of the moralization of intrinsic motivation. First, the chapter addresses that this positive valuation of intrinsic motivation may drive intrinsically motivated employees to moralize it and to make value judgments of others based on their levels of intrinsic motivation. These employees become discerning in that they show positive behavior toward only others who have higher levels of intrinsic motivation. In this sense, the moralization of intrinsic motivation dims the positive sides of intrinsic motivation itself as it has the interpersonal cost. Second, consider what our results suggest for employees who do not have strong intrinsic motivation. These employees may lack intrinsic motivation for a variety of reasons, including their socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds which may not support this idealized view of intrinsic motivation (Johnson et al., 2020). Similarly, some employees are more constrained in the kinds of jobs they are able to take

on, having to provide economically for their families above all else (Menges et al., 2017). The results suggests that employees who lack intrinsic motivation or who are less likely to express their intrinsic motivation at work may be judged as less moral, and therefore may receive less help from their colleagues. This effect may subsequently make it less likely they can advance through organizational ranks. Understanding the implications of the value-laden nature of intrinsic motivation may thus help scholars understand an unintended role of intrinsic motivation in perpetuating inequality in organizations, and help organizations prevent a possible cultural clash between individuals with varying levels of intrinsic motivation.

Chapter 4 also sheds light on another unintended negative consequence of intrinsic motivation for employees, where employees' extra efforts to show intrinsic motivation are often unrecognized. This study's results indicate that employees' verbal representations of intrinsic motivation can increase their perceived intrinsic motivation, but most employees choose not to talk about their intrinsic motivation directly. Instead, employees try to display typical behaviors of intrinsically motivated workers: They smile at work, they work on extra task for extra hours, and they regulate their emotions to hide the negatives and exaggerate the positives. In doing so, these employees believe that their leaders would notice their intrinsic motivation and reward it. Unfortunately, employees' behavioral efforts to show intrinsic motivation are not effective. The results show that leaders are not good at capturing employees' motivation, as shown in several previous papers (DeVoe & Iyengar, 2004; Heath, 1999). More importantly, the results further indicate that leaders are even worse at noticing employees' intrinsic motivation display.

Arguably, this mismatch between intrinsic motivation display and perceived intrinsic motivation can be exploitative. Although leaders may have a benign intention when they promote intrinsic motivation at work, their positive valuation of intrinsic motivation could exploit employees

because leaders fail to acknowledge and reward employees' extra effort to show intrinsic motivation.

Finally, Chapter 4 contributes to the literature on intrinsic motivation by questioning a shared assumption in prior studies and management practices that intrinsic motivation reported by employees represents their true intrinsic motivation. Scholars have developed several self-reported measures to capture employees' work motivation (e.g., Amabile, 1985; Grant, 2008; Ryan & Connell, 1989). Many positive outcomes of intrinsic motivation are found using these measures, including performance (Cerasoli et al., 2014), creativity (Grant & Berry, 2011), and prosociality (Finkelstein, 2011). Likewise, leaders often evaluate their followers and job candidates based on their work motivation; for example, job candidates' expressions of intrinsic motivation in their resume are enough to increase their chances of being hired (Woolley & Fishbach, 2018). The theory of intrinsic motivation display, however, suggests that the levels of intrinsic motivation employees show to others may not be their true levels of intrinsic motivation. My results show that employees often exaggerate their intrinsic motivation when asked directly. If this is true, previous scholarly findings about the impact of intrinsic motivation may not capture the full picture because, similar to social desirability bias, some employees may choose to overrate it. Further, leaders' efforts to hire intrinsically motivated employees may end up favoring employees who are good at showing intrinsic motivation, rather than employees who actually have it.

Other than these theoretical contributions to the literature on intrinsic motivation, Chapter 3 also contributes to the literature on moral psychology in two ways. First, the results show that individuals make moral judgments of others based on a characteristic they cannot perceive accurately. Individuals are biased to discount others' intrinsic motivation to work because they

cannot observe others' internal attitudes toward work directly (Heath, 1999). Nevertheless, our theory suggests that employees who moralize intrinsic motivation may judge others who are perceived to lack it more harshly and help them less. Individuals' moralization and subsequent moral judgments thus depend not just on others' moral or immoral character but also on the ways that character is perceived. In consequence, individuals may judge others' morality even when those others do not exhibit specific moral or immoral behaviors (e.g., smoking cigarettes) or attitudes (e.g., being a vegetarian).

Second, this research applies moralization theory to a broader range of organizational phenomena than previous literature in the moral psychology in organizations did. This literature often focused on the moral and immoral behaviors of leaders and coworkers, such as ethical leader behaviors and employees' moral disengagement (e.g., Mayer, Aquino, Greenbaum, & Kuenzi, 2012; Moore et al., 2019; Moore, Detert, Klebe Treviño, Baker, & Mayer, 2012). In doing so, scholars have considered positive and negative emotions such as enthusiasm and disgust as a source of moralization (Brandt et al., 2015). Our research, however, shows that enthusiasm toward work itself can be moralized in organizational contexts. When the positive valuation of intrinsic motivation is so prevalent in employees' social surroundings, employees may begin to consider it a moral character by itself, not just a proxy for positive work outcomes.

Chapter 4 also contributes to the impression management literature by showing that employees utilize intrinsic motivation display as a way to maintain their pre-existing positive relationships. First, I theorize how showing intrinsic motivation can be an important impression management tactic in organizational contexts. I further examine why and how employees engage in intrinsic motivation display and whether it is effective. Second, I study the role of intrinsic motivation display in maintaining ongoing relationships, rather than in creating positive first

impressions. Scholars pointed out a lack of research on impression management tactics for relationship maintenance because most research focused on relationship creation such as hiring (Bolino et al., 2016). This study extends the literature by showing that employees engage in intrinsic motivation display toward their colleagues beyond the initial interaction. Specifically, employees believe that showing intrinsic motivation can create an impression of a “good” colleague who can keep contributing to the relationship.

## **5.2 Implications for Future Research**

Scholars can certainly examine the behavioral and affective consequences of the moralization of intrinsic motivation suggested in the theory chapter. I examined two outcomes of the moralization of intrinsic motivation (i.e., helping and exaggeration of intrinsic motivation), but there are many other consequences of the moralization that are waiting to be tested. Besides these outcomes, I see three additional areas of future inquiry: (a) the role of job context and culture in shaping how people justify the work that they do, (b) the positive impact of the moralization of intrinsic motivation, and (c) the moralization of other types of motivation. I describe each in turn.

First, future research can examine job- and culture-related factors that accelerate or slow the moralization of intrinsic motivation. For example, job prosocial impact—the degree to which a job makes meaningful consequences for others (Grant, 2012)—may speed up the moralization of intrinsic motivation. In all contexts I studied—banking, consulting, and assisting medical professionals—the work is thought to have neutral or positive impacts on others. However, by nature, some jobs serve a noble purpose (e.g., helping children) while others do not (e.g., making weapons). The moralization of intrinsic motivation would be stronger for jobs that are serving a noble purpose (prosociality) because the nobility of intrinsic motivation, once moralized, is

congruent with the nobility of these jobs. In contrast, moralizing intrinsic motivation for a job that lacks prosociality may induce dissonance for employees because the “bad” nature of their work dilutes the idea of being “good” by having intrinsic motivation and following what is valued in their social contexts. However, this prediction needs a word of caution, as few employees may admit that their work serves a bad purpose. Given that work is central in many individuals’ lives, employees may focus on the positive aspects of their work in order to maintain a positive self-image. For example, those who produce weapons may not perceive their jobs as killing people but may believe their work serves a patriotic purpose. Because individuals’ positive feelings about an issue lead to positive value judgment (Brandt et al., 2015), employees can still moralize intrinsic motivation in those jobs as well. Similarly, employees can moralize intrinsic motivation in dull, repetitive jobs as they rethink the purpose of their work in a positive manner (e.g., janitor jobs help maintaining the community clean, Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Scholars can thus examine whether intrinsic motivation is moralized universally or whether job characteristics serve as a boundary condition.

Future studies can also investigate cultural differences in the moralization of intrinsic motivation. Although my use of empirical samples from Latin America and the United States show that the theory is robust to some cultural differences, testing the theory in other cultural contexts can be worthwhile. As stated earlier in the discussion, the idea of loving one’s work is universal to some extent. Many religious beliefs such as the Protestant work ethic in the United States and the traditional Japanese culture attach values to maintaining strong personal connections to work (Bellah, 1957). However, the meaning of work also varies widely across cultures. For example, “tight” (e.g., China, Singapore) cultures have strong social norms and are less tolerant of deviant behaviors (Gelfand et al., 2011). In such cultures, intrinsic motivation



may receive much less attention because abiding by others' expectations of job choice is more important than liking one's job (Liu, Jiang, Shalley, Keem, & Zhou, 2016). Some people might even think that intrinsic motivation is immoral because it denotes individuals' desire to *selfishly* choose what they like instead of what would make others around them happy. Thus, individuals from these countries may feel ambivalent about intrinsic motivation or may even moralize it in a negative way. In future studies, researchers could investigate cultural differences in the moralization of intrinsic motivation as well as the possibility of its *negative* moralization in certain contexts.

Relatedly, studying cultural differences in intrinsic motivation display could be another exciting avenue for future studies. On the one hand, intrinsic motivation display may be universal across different cultures. The positive value of loving the work is well accepted (e.g., Protestant work ethic in the United States, Tokugawa religion in Japan (Bellah, 1957)). Therefore, employees may engage in intrinsic motivation display to create positive images regardless of cultural background. On the other hand, employees may consider intrinsic motivation display as hypocritical in some cultures. Employees' average levels of workplace engagement, for example, vary across nations (e.g., 29% of the U.S. workforce answered that they were engaged at work in 2011; only 6% gave the same answer in East Asia, State of the Global Workplace, Gallup, 2011). Because having genuine intrinsic motivation is so rare in some countries, employees may think that others are simply displaying it when these others express intrinsic motivation. In these cultures, showing other types of motivation (e.g., extrinsic motivation) or even hiding intrinsic motivation can be more effective than intrinsic motivation display in creating a candid, honest image.

The second research question that deserves scholarly attention concerns possible additional outcomes of the moralization of intrinsic motivation. The current manuscript focuses on the negative consequences of moralization in relation to employees' value judgments, however, it can also have positive impacts. For example, employees who do not initially experience intrinsic motivation may eventually develop it as a result of their attempts to display intrinsic motivation in order to create positive impressions. Research on emotional labor suggests that there are two types of emotional labor: surface acting and deep acting (Grandey, 2003). Employees who exaggerate their intrinsic motivation could engage in deep acting, which modifies their inner feelings about their work, beyond surface acting, where they merely imitate positive characteristics of intrinsically motivated employees. As they do so over time, they may come to internalize intrinsic motivation and begin feeling it spontaneously. Future research could investigate when and how employees' display of intrinsic motivation increases the levels of their actual intrinsic motivation: that is, when they "fake it until they make it."

Another potential positive outcome of the moralization of intrinsic motivation is employees' efforts to cultivate others' intrinsic motivation in order to guide others to a moral path. Instead of punishing those who lack intrinsic motivation, employees who moralize it may decide to inspire such others and enhance their intrinsic motivation. While this possibility seems to be the intention behind many graduation speeches and inspirational articles that endorse intrinsic motivation, I expect this effort to be a double-edged sword. When the effort succeeds, employees will be able to help others find personal enjoyment and growth in their work. When implemented carelessly, however, this effort could only flaunt focal employees' underlying moral superiority and harm others' feelings. That is, similar to showing high performance (Swencionis & Fiske, 2016), showing high levels of intrinsic motivation may induce other

employees' social comparison rather than increase these employees' desires to cultivate their intrinsic motivation. Further, if these others only internalize intrinsic motivation as a moral ideal but fail to experience it themselves, and thus suffer from lowered self-integrity due to not meeting their new moral standard (to have intrinsic motivation). Future research could examine when employees who moralize intrinsic motivation take the inspirational approach and when such effort is successful.

Finally, moralization of other types of motivation, especially extrinsic motivation, is an interesting area for future research. Extrinsic motivation refers to employees' willingness to work for reasons external to the work itself, often for reward and recognition (Amabile et al., 1994). Whereas intrinsic motivation is valued in most social contexts, extrinsic motivation has a rather ambivalent reputation. Many religious beliefs consider money, a type of external reward, to be a taboo topic or even a sin.<sup>11</sup> However, individuals' valuation of money can vary greatly (Tang, Tang, & Luna-Arocas, 2005). For example, social groups such as the Financial Independence, Retire Early (FIRE) movement explicitly attach positive meanings to money despite the prevailing work value of the mainstream society (Sunday, 2021). This movement stresses that earning enough money to cover living expenses by investment returns opens individuals up to the potential for a simple lifestyle where they could engage in voluntary practices that they find truly fulfilling (Fisker, 2010). Likewise, fame is considered negative in some cultures but crucial in others (e.g., "bringing honor to the family" in East Asian cultures). Future research could examine in which contexts extrinsic motivation is positively or negatively moralized and the relationship between the moralization of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

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<sup>11</sup> "For the love of money is the root of all of evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (Timothy 6:10).

The role of extrinsic motivation in the moralization of intrinsic motivation is also noteworthy. Previous research on work motivation found that individuals can have high levels of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation at the same time (Amabile, 1993; Cerasoli et al., 2014). Research has also shown, conversely, that individuals perceive others' motivation in an extreme way, in a sense that perceived extrinsic motivation decreases perceived intrinsic motivation (Derfler-Rozin & Pitesa, 2020). We tested hypotheses specific to intrinsic motivation in our current study, but we suggest that perceived extrinsic motivation can worsen individuals' moral judgments by decreasing perceived intrinsic motivation. It is thus possible that those who are perceived to have high intrinsic motivation and low extrinsic motivation would be viewed as much worse than those who have low extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Future research could examine the relationship between these two types of motivation further.

Specific to Chapter 3, scholars could expand the results and study how these individual-level outcomes of the moralization of intrinsic motivation unfold at the group level as employees with different levels of intrinsic motivation interact. For example, employees with higher intrinsic motivation may dehumanize their teammates with lower intrinsic motivation and marginalize them because they think they are less moral and thus undeserving of respect (Waytz & Schroeder, 2014). However, their teammates may consider such treatment unreasonable because they do not associate the lack of intrinsic motivation with a lack of morality. As a result, interpersonal tension and organizational conflict may ensue. Future research could investigate both individual-level (e.g., resource allocation, evaluation) and organization-level (e.g., team conflict) outcomes of this asymmetry.

In addition, although our results show a robust relationship between individuals' and others' intrinsic motivation in both actual (Study 1 and Study 2) and perceived (Study 3) forms,

our data do not allow us to compare the impacts of the two different forms of motivation. Previous research on perceived and actual motivation suggests that the impact of perceived motivation on individuals' behavior is stronger than that of actual motivation (Kristof-Brown & Stevens, 2001). Because individuals tend to discount others' intrinsic motivation (Heath, 1999), we expect that employees would be even more selective in actual work settings than in experiments. That is, employees who moralize intrinsic motivation may fail to acknowledge others' intrinsic motivation and may perceive those who have sufficiently high intrinsic motivation as lacking intrinsic motivation and thus as lacking morality. The fact that we found significant impacts for actual intrinsic motivation in our field studies thus provides conservative evidence that teammates' intrinsic motivation indeed matters. In future studies, scholars could measure the actual and perceived intrinsic motivation at the same time to compare their impacts on employees' behavior.

Related to the above point, it would be worthwhile to study how quickly and accurately individuals form perceptions of others' intrinsic motivation, and whether such perceptions are malleable. Because our theory is about employees' value judgments of others based on their intrinsic motivation, we assume that employees have some information about others' intrinsic motivation regardless of its accuracy. We expect that employees would indeed have this information in most cases; questions about motivation (i.e., "Why are you here?") are frequently asked in work settings, as part of the hiring process or daily conversation. Employees may also attribute others' work motivation by observing those others' behavior (e.g., "She always goes above and beyond at work; she must like it very much."), though such attributions may not always be accurate. We further expect that employees who moralize intrinsic motivation would seek information about others' intrinsic motivation proactively early on as part of core person

perceptions (Leach et al., 2007). Future studies could look at how initial perceptions of others' work motivation form and how those perceptions change over time. For example, employees who moralize intrinsic motivation may also constantly check on others' intrinsic motivation and update their perceptions because they care about it so much. These employees may also react more sensitively to any cues that suggest a lack of intrinsic motivation, such as the presence of extrinsic motivation (Derfler-Rozin & Pitesa, 2020).

Specific to Chapter 4, I only covered employees' intrinsic motivation display toward their colleagues, especially their supervisors and coworkers. However, as shown in Study 1, employees try to show intrinsic motivation to diverse audiences (e.g., subordinates, family and friends, and themselves) for a variety of reasons (e.g., to motivate others, to cultivate a positive work environment). One fruitful area of future research would be to study why and how employees engage in intrinsic motivation display toward their subordinates. Study 1 illustrates that intrinsic motivation display toward subordinate often has prosocial motives (e.g., for encouragement), whereas intrinsic motivation display toward supervisor stems from extrinsic motives (e.g., for reward and recognition). Studying these differences could not only extend the current model on intrinsic motivation display but also contribute to the motivation literature by showing how different types of motivation interact. In addition, intrinsic motivation display from supervisors to subordinates may have its unique outcomes. On the one hand, supervisors' intrinsic motivation display can be more effective because their hierarchical position allows them to emphasize intrinsic motivation explicitly. On the other hand, however, such intrinsic motivation display may end up increasing subordinates' intrinsic motivation *display* only, rather than their actual intrinsic motivation.

Another fruitful avenue of future research is to study employees' intrinsic motivation display toward themselves. By definition, intrinsic motivation should not involve constant external influence to maintain it, because it refers to employees' *autonomous* engagement in work. However, Study 1 shows that some employees remind themselves of their own intrinsic motivation in order to maintain it. This finding suggests that even employees with high levels of intrinsic motivation may experience it in a cycle. That is, even when an employee likes her job greatly, she might, from time to time, lose her intrinsic motivation under a difficult situation (e.g., receiving negative performance review). This employee may then engage in intrinsic motivation display toward herself to remind herself of and replenish her love toward the job. Previous literature on intrinsic motivation, such as Self-Determination Theory, would not classify this as pure intrinsic motivation because it requires external efforts to maintain (Gagné & Deci, 2005). However, this cycle may be unavoidable in work contexts where employees are not truly autonomous—they cannot decide when to work and what to work on, and employees' intrinsic motivation display can be a tactic they maintain their own intrinsic motivation. It would be interesting to study these dynamics of self-toward intrinsic motivation display.

Finally, Chapter 4 shows that employees inflate their intrinsic motivation, but future research could also examine whether and why employees may try to *discount* their intrinsic motivation in front of others. Employees have several different reasons to discount their intrinsic motivation. First, because intrinsic motivation is a center of positive attention in the current managerial discourse, showing too much of it may incur coworkers' negative feelings such as jealousy. Coworkers, especially those with lower levels of intrinsic motivation, may feel jealous of intrinsically motivated employees because these employees enjoy the work that the coworkers cannot enjoy. They may also engage in social comparison and feel threatened because

intrinsically motivated employees represent an image of an “ideal” worker, whereas the coworkers do not. To avoid these uncomfortable situations, employees may choose to hide their intrinsic motivation. Second, employees may not want to share positive aspects of their job with others because they do not like those others and thus do not want to provide potentially useful information to them. Future research could examine why and how employees try to show low levels of intrinsic motivation to others. Further, future research could also examine whether employees’ effort to discount their intrinsic motivation is effective, given that employees’ effort to inflate their intrinsic motivation is found to be largely ineffective.

### **5.3 Implications for Practice**

For employees, my dissertation highlights that their intrinsic motivation can translate into a signal of morality. Expressing high levels of intrinsic motivation can help employees create an image of a “good” worker and can bring their colleagues’ and leaders’ support. In contrast, those who do not experience intrinsic motivation are less likely to receive support from others, highlighting a conundrum for them: On the one hand, they could try increasing their intrinsic motivation by engaging in job crafting, that is, using their job autonomy to select or change the tasks they are doing; on the other hand, employees may also feel pressure to exhibit intrinsic motivation even if they do not feel it. This pressure leads to engaging in both cognitive and emotional labor that can be personally taxing. In this way, the high valuation of intrinsic motivation may place a burden on those who are less interested in or able to experience intrinsic motivation for their work, exacerbating the chasm between those who have and do not have intrinsic motivation.

The results of Chapter 4 further warn employees that going the extra mile at work may not be enough to boost others’ perceptions about employees’ intrinsic motivation. The results



suggest that employees need to talk about their intrinsic motivation explicitly in order to communicate it to others. There might be many ways for employees to do this. On the one hand, instead of merely trying to show positive work behaviors at work, employees can attribute those behaviors to their intrinsic motivation. On the other hand, employees can mention intrinsic motivation even when they are complaining about certain aspects of their job so that others do not discount their intrinsic motivation. These action plans may sound inauthentic; however, most employees have their favorite task even when they hate most parts of their job. They thus do not need to lie about their intrinsic motivation in order to emphasize it. Instead, they can try to make remarks on what they like about their job (however few). Ultimately, the advice for employees is clear: You need to communicate your intrinsic motivation more often if you want others to notice it.

Leaders may consider moralizing intrinsic motivation to be an effective way to endorse it in their organizations. Once employees moralize intrinsic motivation, they perceive its lack as a lack of morality. Thus, they will try to adopt intrinsic motivation in order to judge themselves positively and receive positive value judgments from others. The moralization of intrinsic motivation further justifies leaders' establishing of rules and expectations to encourage and reward intrinsic motivation. Indeed, leaders have produced a managerial discourse that emphasizes intrinsic motivation (Derfler-Rozin & Pitesa, 2020) and have established business practices that endorse it in the domains of job design (Hackman & Oldham, 1976), socialization (Peterson & Ruiz-quintanilla, 2003), and hiring (Woolley & Fishbach, 2018). In this sense, organizational leaders have used moralization as a tactic to increase followers' intrinsic motivation.

Based on the theory of the moralization of intrinsic motivation, however, I urge leaders to recognize the broad impact their remarks about intrinsic motivation can have on employees. Leaders' valuation of intrinsic motivation can lead to negative consequences through its moralization. Some employees may internalize such valuation of intrinsic motivation and make value judgments of others, which possibly lead to value incongruence and conflict at work (Jehn, Chadwick, & Thatcher, 2000). In this way, an emphasis on intrinsic motivation in the workplace may make it more challenging for employees who are less intrinsically motivated to advance through the ranks of the organization, overrepresenting intrinsic motivation at higher ranks of the organization.

Leaders should further be careful when they endorse intrinsic motivation in their organizations because they are not good at recognizing followers' intrinsic motivation. As some participants wrote down in their open-ended responses in Study 1, Chapter 4 (“[It is] required by the company to smile, actually.” “[My boss] wanted [me] to show that I loved to keep a spotless area. I wanted him to think that I like to clean. For the attention.”), leaders frequently attempt to cultivate and reward followers' intrinsic motivation. However, the results also suggest that leaders are not good at gauging their followers' intrinsic motivation, both in its true and displayed forms. As a result, these leaders may end up rewarding employees who know how to express intrinsic motivation, instead of those who truly have it. In addition, leaders may also fail to notice their followers' extra efforts to show their intrinsic motivation, which may lead to the followers' disappointment toward leaders and their endorsement of intrinsic motivation. I therefore suggest that leaders should enhance intrinsic motivation by supporting organizational practices that cultivate it, rather than stressing its importance and rewarding it directly.

Besides the negative intrapersonal and interpersonal outcomes discussed in this dissertation, I warn that intrinsic motivation, once moralized, can generate and sustain an exploitative work culture. When leaders moralize intrinsic motivation, they are more concerned with whether the moral standard (i.e., having intrinsic motivation) is met than with why it is (un)met or whether it should be met. In doing so, they divert attention from the real cause of low intrinsic motivation, such as employees' socioeconomic backgrounds or broken jobs. Instead, they blame their followers for lacking intrinsic motivation and ask them to love the work even when it involves physical or psychological risks, does not support work-life balance, or provides no learning opportunities that fuel intrinsic motivation. In this sense, the moralization of intrinsic motivation tightens the Weberian iron cage; in the iron cage, employees should not only work for unenjoyable jobs but also blame themselves and others for not loving such work. Through this dissertation, I hope to shift scholars' and practitioners' attention toward this exploitative nature of the moralization of intrinsic motivation. I thus conclude my paper with a normative question: Is moralizing intrinsic motivation moral? My answer is no.

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