An Evidence-based Model of Morale - So What for Leaders?

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Why study morale?

"It is not enough to fight. It is the spirit which we bring to the fight that decides the issue. It is morale that wins the victory."

General George C. Marshall

Maintenance of Morale is one of ten principles of war. *"After leadership, morale is the most important element in ensuring cohesion and the will to win."*

Canadian Military Doctrine

- It is of interest across organizational settings
- It is a global phenomenon
- It has been associated with numerous organizational outcomes (e.g., demands, interpersonal relationships, health & well-being, performance)
- It is not well understood

What *is* morale?

Source: Ivey & Mantler (in progress)

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Relevant theories

Theories of affect - Positive affect contributes to positive attitudes, well-being, and effective performance through greater mental clarity and action orientation, increased energy and enthusiasm, and a greater likelihood of building psychosocial job resources (e.g., relations)

(Ashkanasy & Humphrey, 2011; Ewles, van der Werf, Eren, & Budgell, 2016; Frederickson, 2001; Hochschild, 1983)

Self-determination theory - Individuals who act on their own volition and in accordance with their values and goals (autonomously) demonstrate optimal functioning at work.

- Contingent on satisfaction of three psychological needs: *competence, autonomy, relatedness*
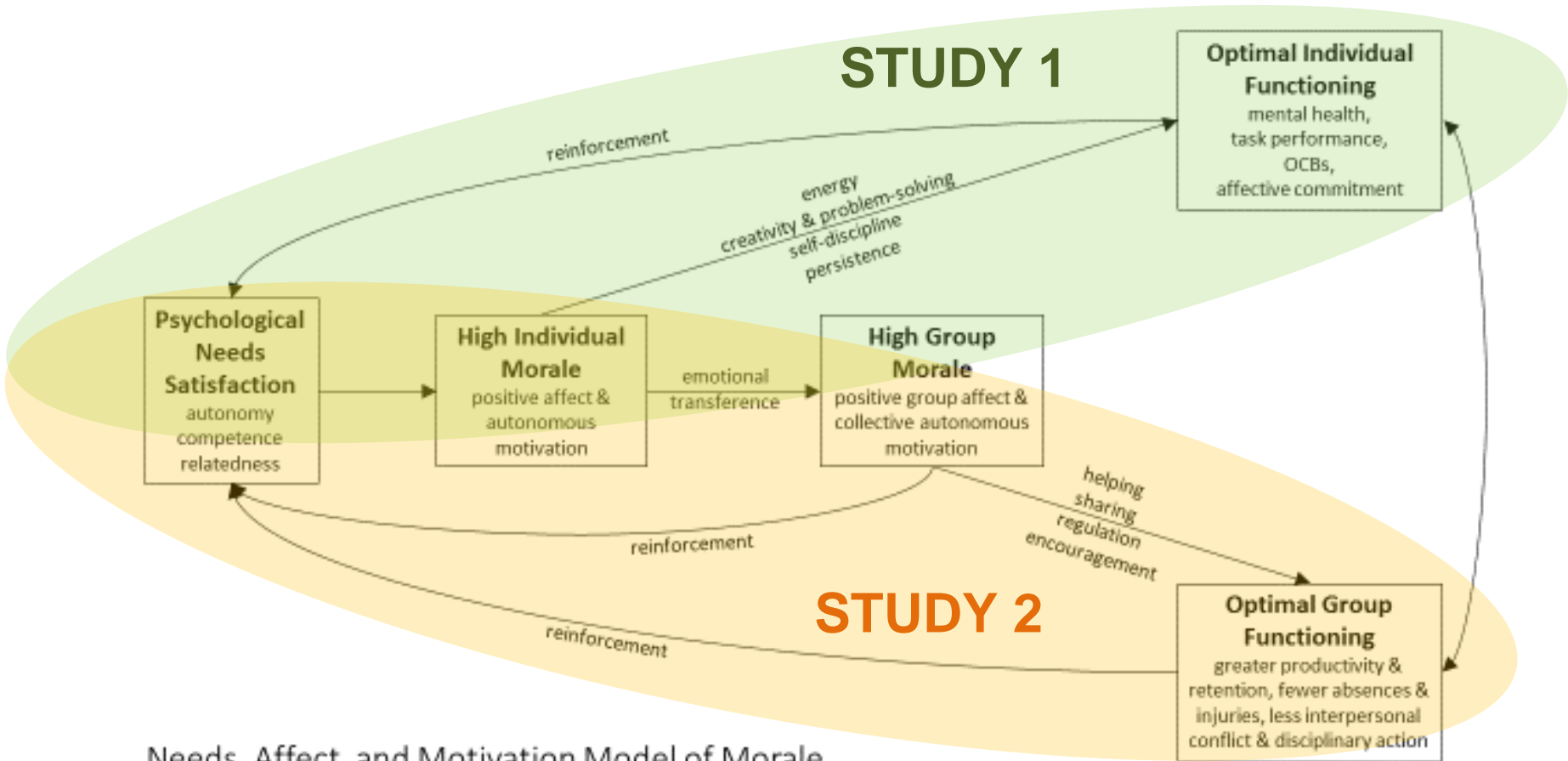
(Deci, Connell, & Ryan, 1989; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000)

Emotional transference - Affective states of individuals in a relationship or group become increasingly similar with time due to deliberate (affective induction) and implicit (emotional contagion) processes

(Anderson, Keltner, & John, 2003; Bartel & Saavedrea, 2000)

Conceptual model of morale

Needs, Affect, and Motivation Model of Morale

Source: Ivey (2017)

Study 1 – Testing the representation of morale (M-factor)

Procedure

- Electronic survey 2018 (DWWS+)
  - Morale = multiple dimensions of motivation, positive/negative job affect
  - Convergent validity = Single-item morale
  - Predictors = psychological needs (autonomy, competence, relatedness)
  - Outcomes = OCBs, psychological distress
- Large branch of DND/CAF (N = 3,122; 23% response rate)
- Sampling weights were calculated and applied
- English only (vs. French)
- 53% regular, 38% reserve, 9% civilian
- 80% male
- Age: 18-34 years (51%), 35-54 years (41%), 55 plus (8%)

Study 1 (Cont)
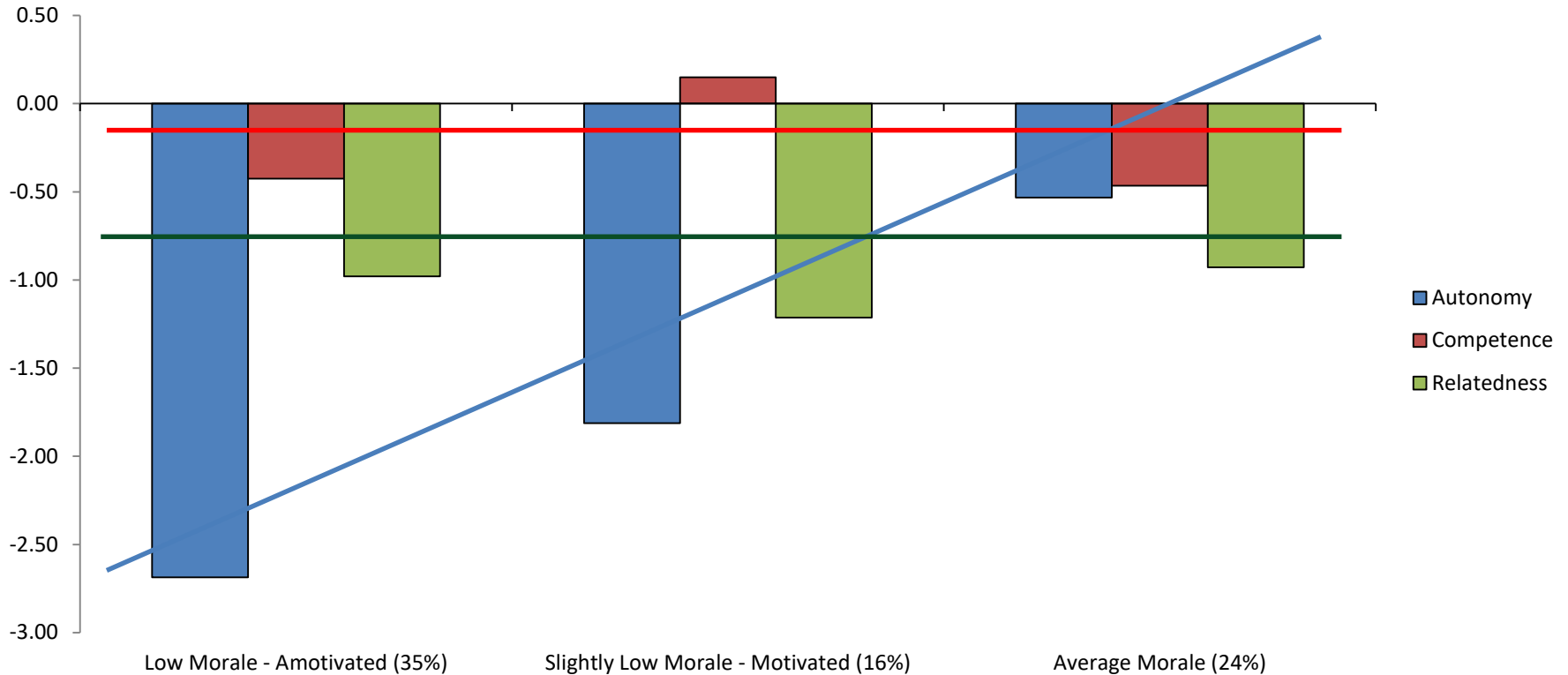# The different faces of morale

Profiles of Morale
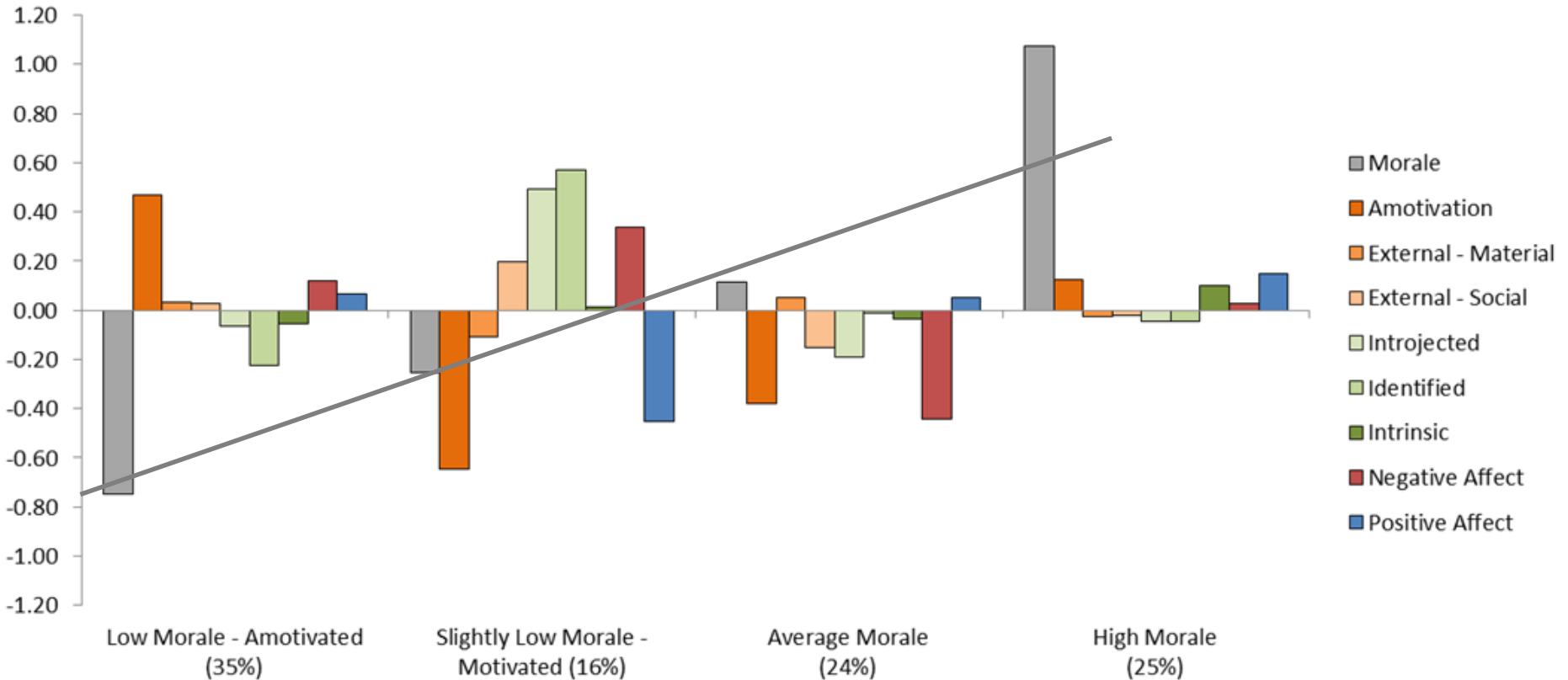
Study 1 (Cont)
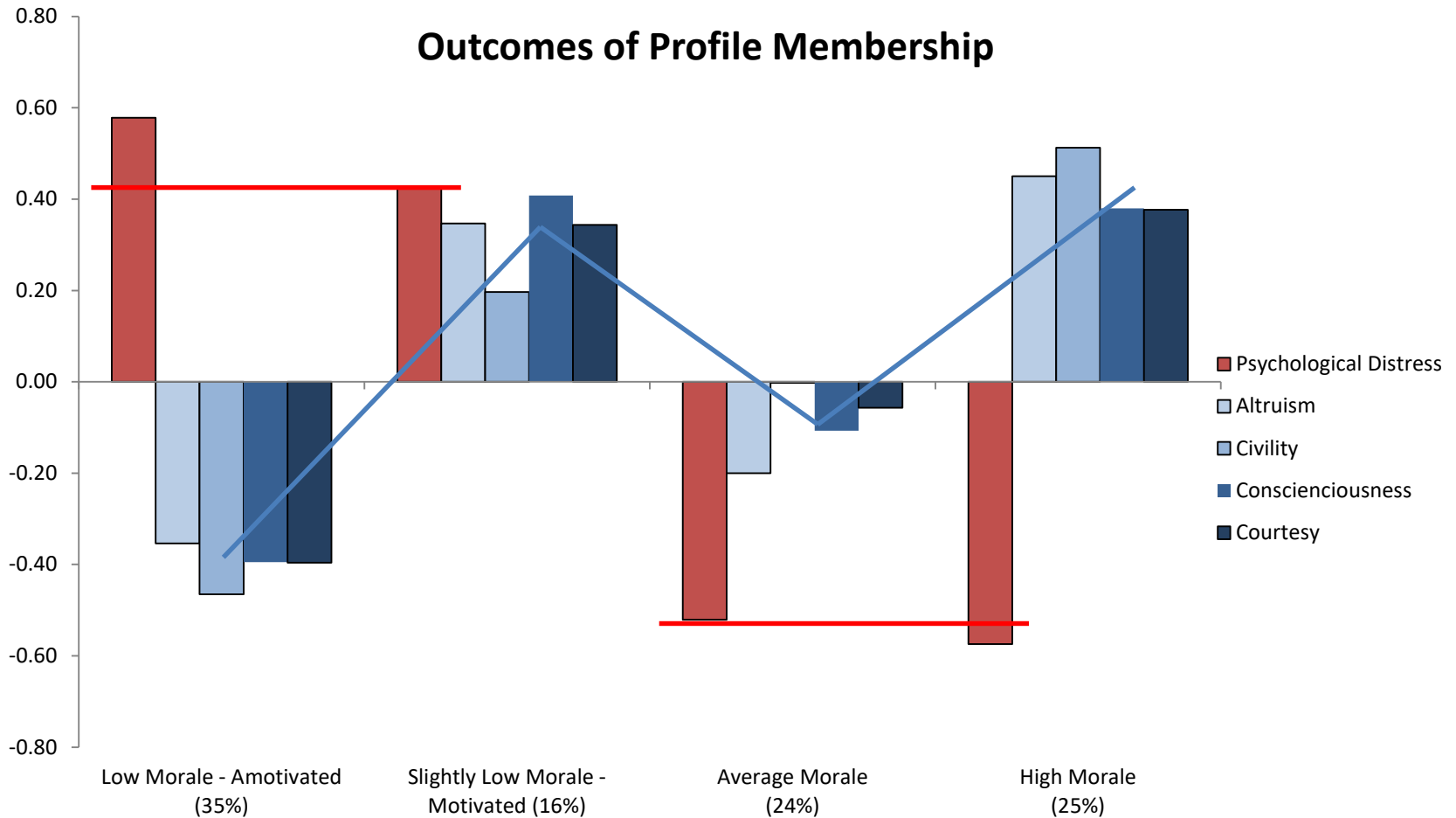# Predictors of morale

Predictors of Profile Membership
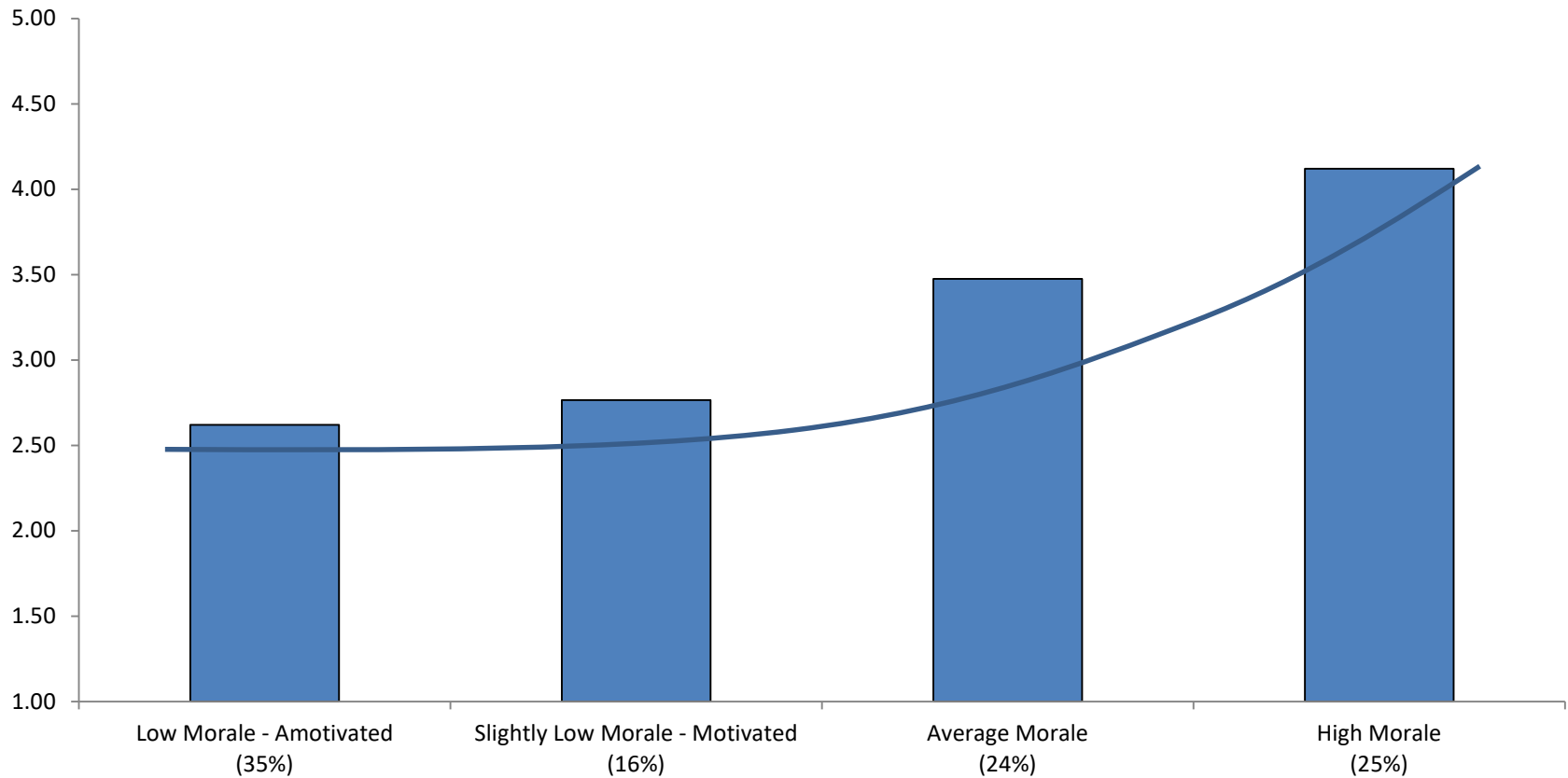
Study 1 (Cont)
Outcomes of morale

Study 1 (Cont)
# Convergent validity: single-item morale

Individual Morale

Advantages of the M-factor

- Stronger predictor of OCBs and psychological distress than single-item

- Theoretically grounded

- Greater insight into the different faces of morale

- Informs leader interventions

So what for leaders?

- Morale is complex
  - Not simply happiness
  - Not simply motivation
  - Different faces

- Psychological needs satisfaction matters

- How?
  - Competence
  - Autonomy
  - Relatedness

Source: Ivey & Mantler (in progress)

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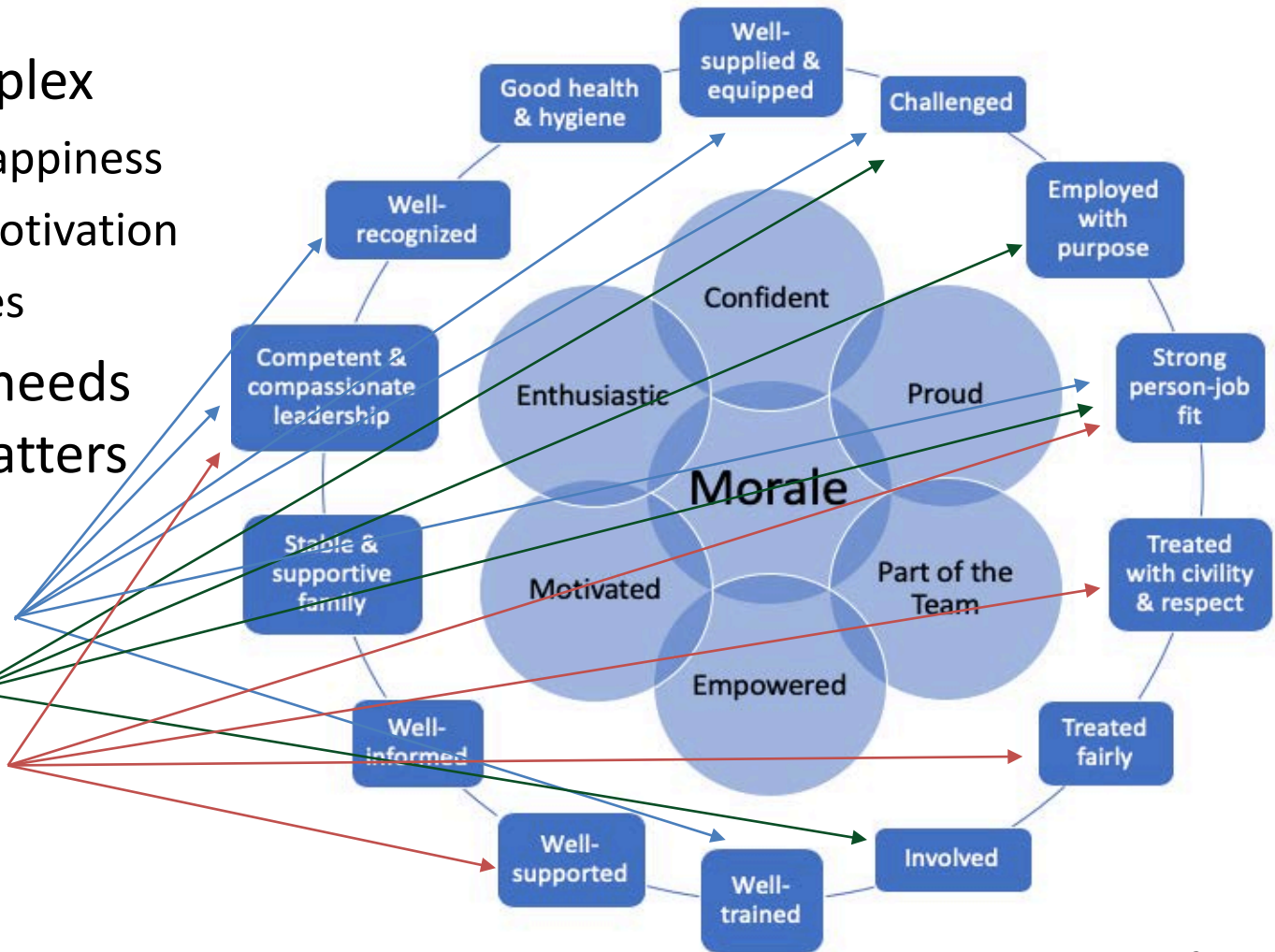
Thank you

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