

# Leadership, Metamotivation, and Beliefs About How to Manage the Motivation of Others

## INTRODUCTION

- **Metamotivation** is the process of monitoring and controlling motivational states during goal pursuit.<sup>[1]</sup>
- We take metamotivation **beyond** the self and examine how people manage the motivation of **others** using a **regulatory focus**<sup>[2]</sup> framework.
- We asked **leaders** how they would **motivate others** for **eager and vigilant tasks** using an **open-ended and consequential** paradigm.
- *Hypothesis:* Leaders will use **promotion-focused** strategies for **eager tasks**, and **prevention-focused** strategies for **vigilant tasks**.

## METHODS

- In a **within-participants design**, leaders ( $N = 182$ ) prepared another participant for **two eager and two vigilant tasks**, in random order, with an **open-ended** response:

“What would you say to the other participant to prepare them for the \_\_\_\_\_ task?”

- |                         |              |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Product development  | } Eager 😁    |
| 2. Advertising          |              |
| 3. Financial Management | } Vigilant 🤔 |
| 4. Quality Control”     |              |

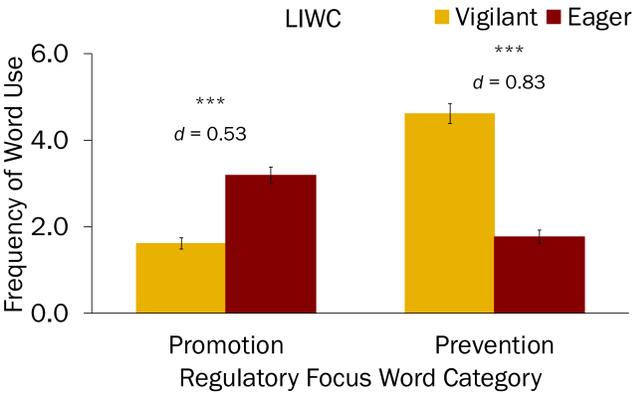
- Responses were analyzed with a **custom regulatory focus dictionary** using linguistic inquiry word count (LIWC)<sup>[3]</sup> software and by **trained human coders** (blind to condition).

Leaders flexibly use different kinds of motivational strategies to prepare people for different kinds of tasks.

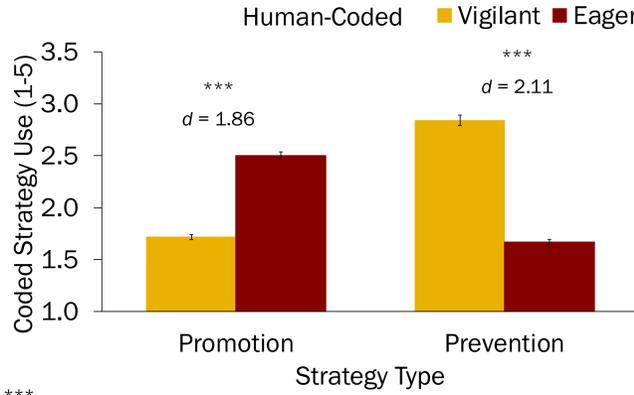


## RESULTS

- Using **LIWC**, results **supported** our predictions:



- **Trained human coders** further **supported** predictions:



\*\*\*  $p < .001$   
Error bars:  $\pm 1 SE$

	1	2	3
1. LIWC Promotion	-		
2. LIWC Prevention	-.08	-	
3. Human-Coded Promotion	.37**	.01	-
4. Human-Coded Prevention	-.13†	.17*	-.03

†  $p < .10$ , \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

## DISCUSSION

- **Metamotivational knowledge** of how to **actively and flexibly** manage the motivation of others may contribute to **effective leadership**.
- **Future work** investigates **downstream consequences** of leaders’ metamotivation for **leader effectiveness**.

## REFERENCES

[1] Scholer, A. A., Miele, D. B., Murayama, K., & Fujita, K. (2018). New directions in self-regulation: The role of metamotivational beliefs. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 6, 437-442.

[2] Higgins, E. T. (1997). Beyond please and pain. *American Psychologist*, 52, 1280-1300.

[3] Pennebaker, J.W., Boyd, R.L., Jordan, K., & Blackburn, K. (2015). *The development and psychometric properties of LIWC2015*. Austin, TX, USA: University of Texas at Austin.