

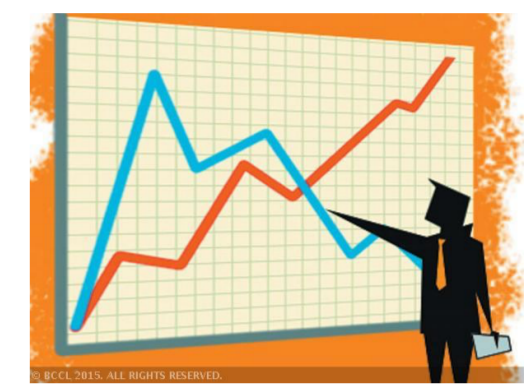
Which Comparison Do I Seek:

Goal Orientation Predicts Preferences for Four Comparison Standards

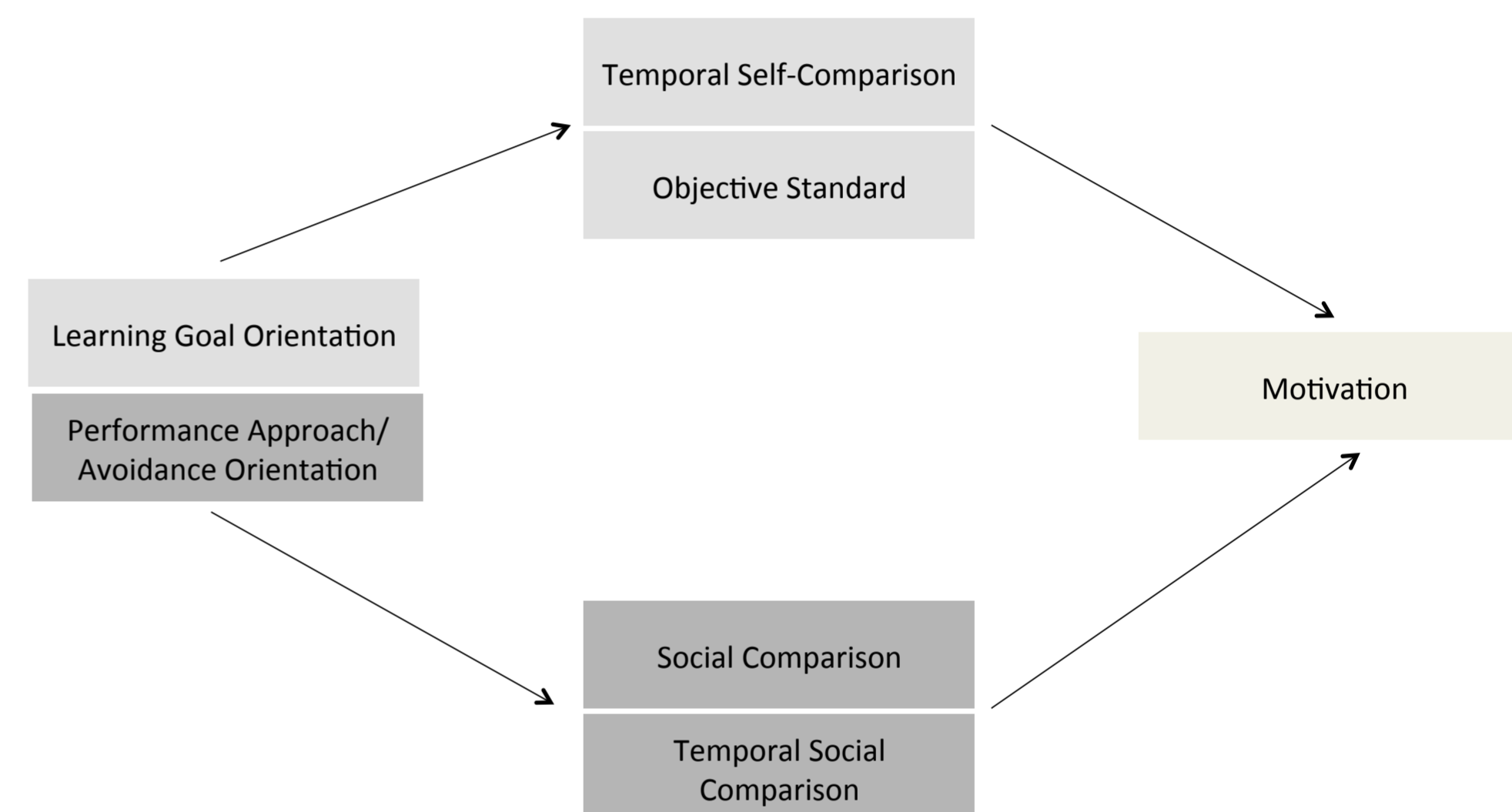
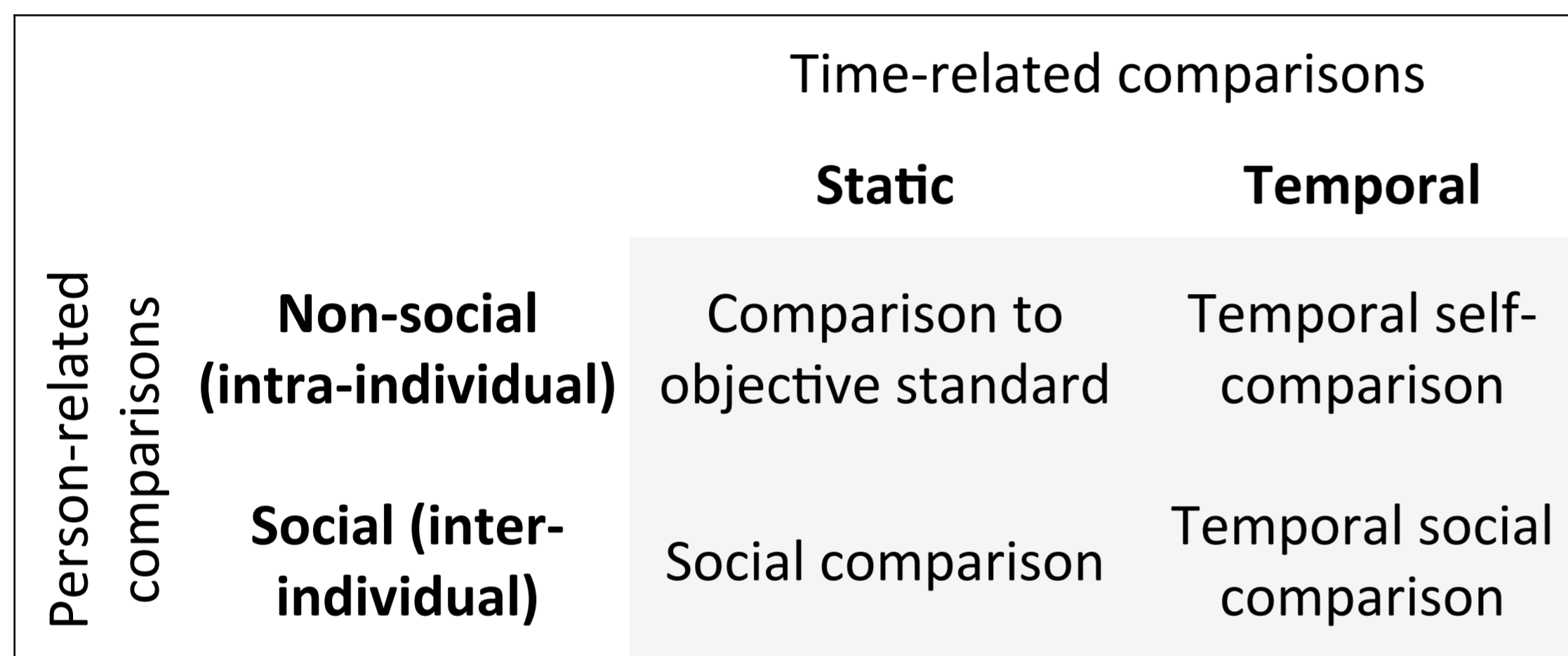
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- Employees receive different kinds of comparison information (Albert, 1977; Festinger, 1954) as part of their performance evaluation, but which of them will motivate them to perform better?



- Goal orientation theory (e.g., Ames & Archer, 1988; Dweck, 1986) suggests individual differences regarding the comparisons people seek
 - Learning Orientation:** Improvement and learning, doing better than before → temporal self-comparison
 - Performance Prove Orientation:** Demonstrating competence, outperforming others → static social comparison
 - Performance Avoid Orientation:** Not Demonstrating incompetence or being outperformed → static social comparison
- However, extant research confounds person-related with time-related comparisons.



Study 1: Online-study on M-Turk using Stroop paradigm

- N = 401
- Goal orientation scale (VandeWalle, 1997)
- Three rounds of Stroop test (Jensen & Rohwer, 1966)



- Preference for four comparison standards
- Learning goal oriented individuals prefer temporal self-comparisons and comparisons to objective standard
- Performance prove oriented individuals prefer social and temporal social comparisons
- Performance avoid oriented individuals prefer social, temporal social, and comparisons to objective standard

Study 2: Two-wave survey with Dutch students

- N = 538 Bachelor students
- T1: Goal orientation scale (VandeWalle, 1997)
- T2: Preference for four comparison standards
- T2: Academic aspirations
 - E.g., motivation, future effort

- Learning goal oriented individuals make temporal self-comparisons and comparisons to objective standard
- Performance prove oriented individuals make social, temporal social and comparisons to objective standard
- Performance avoid oriented individuals make social and temporal social comparisons
- Temporal self (temporal social) comparison mediates the effect of learning (performance prove/avoid) goal orientation on motivation

Discussion

- Extant perspective on goal orientation and comparisons is too narrow: It does not account for temporal social comparisons and comparisons to objective standard
- In performance evaluations, it is important to give information on temporal self comparisons and temporal social comparisons to motivate them
- How do these comparison standards influence actual performance?

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Dweck, C. S. (1986). Motivational processes affecting learning. *American Psychologist*, 41(10), 1040.

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