

The relative influence of organizational identification foci and motivation on presenteeism and absenteeism

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- BACKGROUND -

Organizational identification (OI) can be defined as the perception of oneness with and belongingness to the organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

OI has been found to increase employees involvement and extra-role performance (Riketta, 2005). It has also been found to hold many links with employees health and wellness (Avanzi & al., 2012), and paradoxically, with the level of strain employees experienced from work (Haslam, 2004).

OI can be judged from different angles (see foci): the identification one's hold toward the organization he works for or the identification one's report having toward the job (or position) he currently holds within that particular organization.

Based on the following results, it seems foreseeable that the relative influence of OI foci could help to better explain the reason why employees invest (even though sick) or withdrew themselves from work.

- OBJECTIVES -

This research aims at the three following objectives:

1. Assess the relative influence of different OI foci (ie. organization, supervisor, job) on employees' motivation level and attendance behaviours (ie. presenteeism and absenteeism);
2. Examine the predictive power of the different OI foci (ie. organization, supervisor, job) on employees' motivation level and attendance behaviours (ie. presenteeism and absenteeism);
3. Determine if motivation (as measured by the self-determination theory) plays a mediating role between OI JOB and presenteeism.

- CONTEXT & HYPOTHESIS -

According to Ashforth and Meal (1989), OI can help modeling behavioral patterns of organizational members. Bearing in mind the multiples channels through which OI can be fostered (Avanzi & al., 2012), it seems that identification beliefs one holds can be nourished in different ways: a) by his feelings towards the group or organization he belongs to (*social identification*) or b) by the role he plays in the organization (*professional identification*).

Hence, it seems that adopting a multi foci approach to OI could help detangling the effect of OI on employees motivation and attendance behaviours (i.e. presenteeism and absenteeism). Hence, the following hypothesis are proposed:

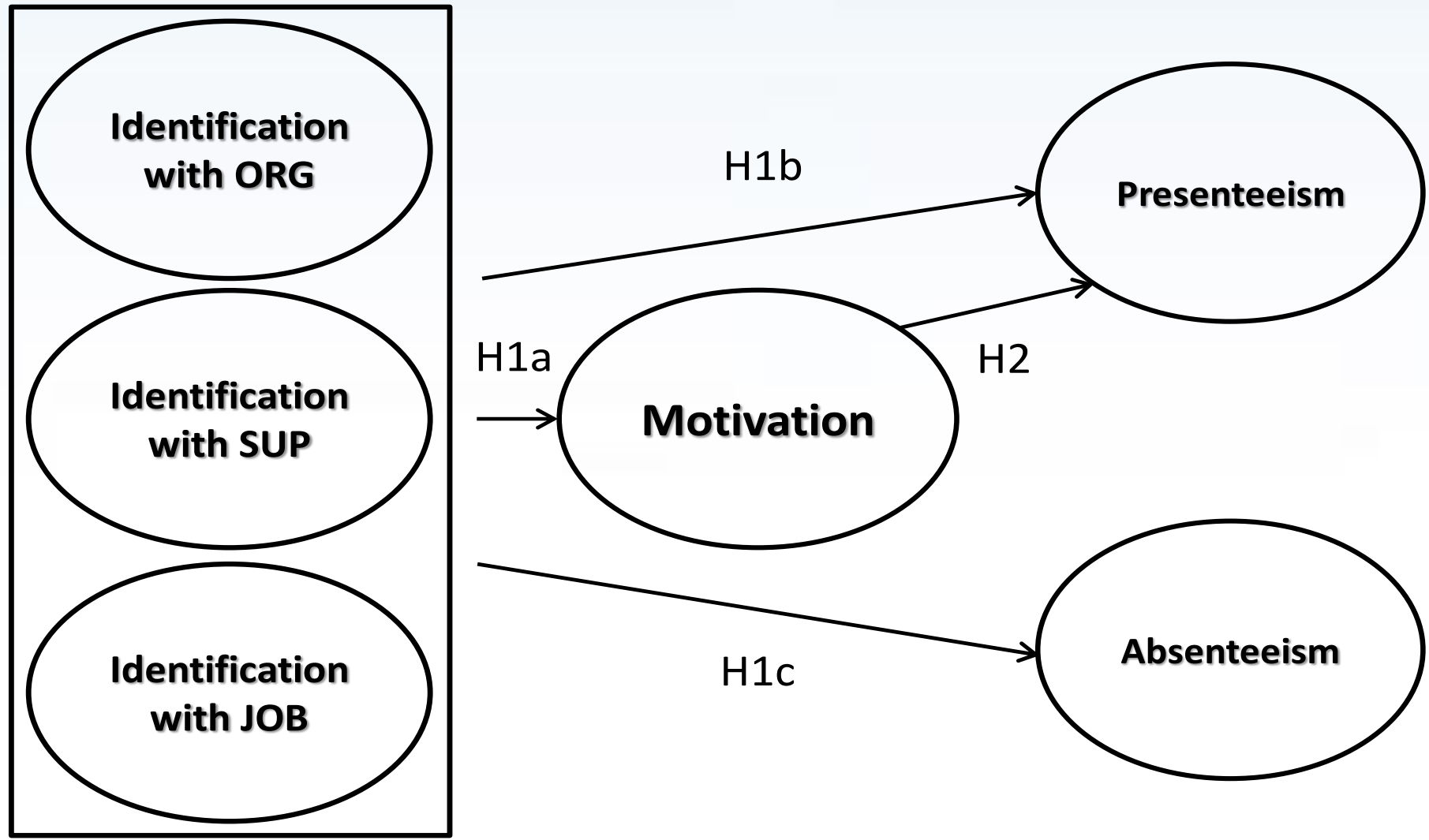
- H1a. OI foci differ in the way they are linked to (and predict) motivation. More specifically, the correlation between OI JOB and motivation is **higher** than the correlation between motivation and OI SUP as well as OI ORG.
- H1b. OI foci differ in the way they are linked to (and predict) presenteeism. More specifically, the correlation between OI JOB and presenteeim is **higher** than the correlation between presenteeism and OI SUP as well as OI ORG.
- H1c. OI foci differ in the way they are linked to (and predict) absenteeism. More specifically, the correlation between OI JOB and absenteeism is **lower** than the correlation between absenteeism and OI SUP as well as OI ORG.

Considering that individuals who usually hold strong OI believes also tend to perceived the organization's goal as their own (Avanzi & al., 2012), this could in turn motivate them and make them work harder in order to achieve these goals (i.e. put in the extra effort; Riketta, 2005). This could also influence them to behave in accordance with the organization's values and norms (e.g. by reporting more attendance and less presenteeism). Hence, the following hypotheses is proposed:

- H2a. Motivation at work mediates the relationship between OI foci and presenteeism.

We use the framework depicted in Figure 1 to organize the variables examined in this study.

Figure 1: Organized framework of the variables examined



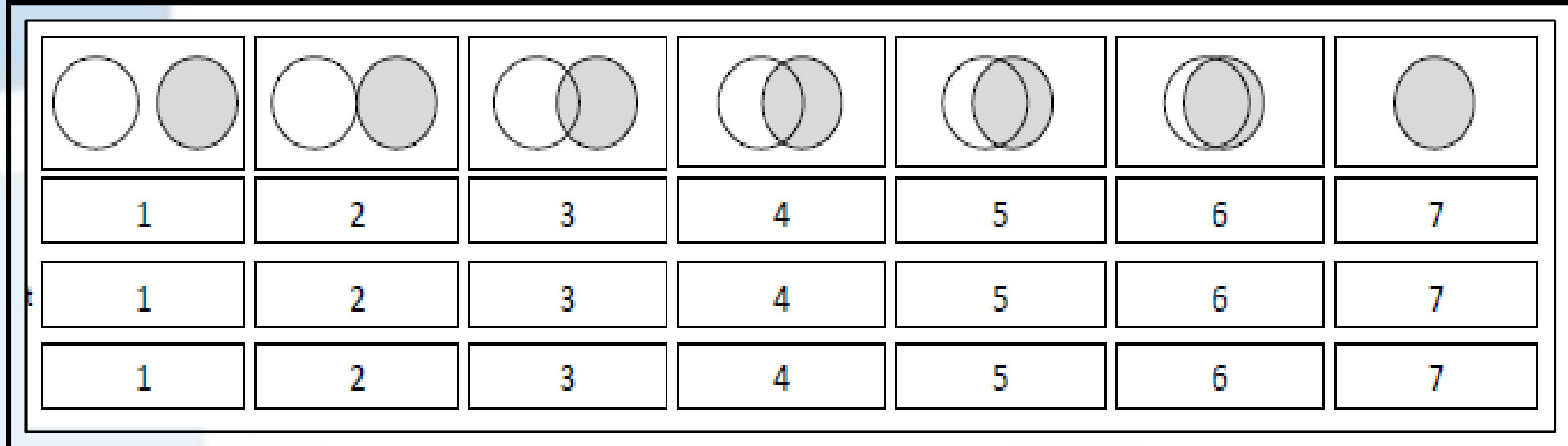
- SAMPLE -

- 210 employees working in a Canadian higher education institution participated to this study.
- Ages: between 22 and 70 years (M=43.46; SD=10.59).
- ♂ 62 (32%); ♀ 135 (68%).
- Work experience: between 2 months to 39 years and 3 months (M=10.65; SD=8.77).
- Working hours per week: M=37.71; SD=8.14.
- Number of dependent children ranged between 1 and 5 (M=1.00; SD=1.11).
- Data were collected using a web based survey.

- MEASURES -

Organizational Identification. Shamir and Kark (2004) graphic scale of OI comprise seven pairs of circles representing various degrees of overlap, from *no overlap* (1) to *complete overlap* (7) between the circles (see below). Respondent were given the following instructions:

This chart is intended to assess your relationship with the organization you belong to. Underneath you will find three lines comprising seven rectangles. In each rectangle there are 2 circles. One represent you and the other your organization (line 1), your supervisor (line 2), your job (line 3). Choose out of the seven rectangles the one that most highly represents the extent to which you identify to your organisation, supervisor and job.



Motivation at Work. Motivation was assed by the motivation at work scale (12 items) developed by Gagné and al. (2010). Participants responded using a 7-point Likert type scale (1 = *Not at all a characteristic of me*; 7 = *Extremely characteristic of me*). A sample item is: *I choose this job because it allows me to reach my life goal*. Alpha observed in the present study: .81 [CI = .77 - .85].

Presenteeism. Single item measure (Deery & al., 2014; Johns, 2010): *Over the past 12 months, how many days have you gone to work despite feeling that you were sick or not feeling well?* As recommended by Johns (2011), responses were truncated on the low end and positively skewed.

Absenteeism. Absenteeism was also measured using a single item (Johns, 2011): *Over the past 12 months, how many days were you absent from work?* As for presenteeism, responses were truncated on the low end and positively skewed (Johns, 2011).

- RESULTS -

Table 1: Differences between correlation coefficients

	OI ORG	OI SUP	OI JOB	vs	z	p
Motivation	.212**	.130	.360**	1 vs 3 2 vs 3	1.673 2.504	0,04 0,01
Presenteeism	-.059	-.069	-.198**	1 vs 3 2 vs 3	1.440 1.338	0,07 0,09
Absenteeism	.181**	.222**	-.047	1 vs 3 2 vs 3	1.383 1.818	0,08 0,03

Note. N [listwise] = 210. Relations in bold are significantly different (at $p < .05$) using a one-tailed test.

- RESULTS (contd.) -

Figure 2: Relative effect of OI foci on motivation and attendance behaviours

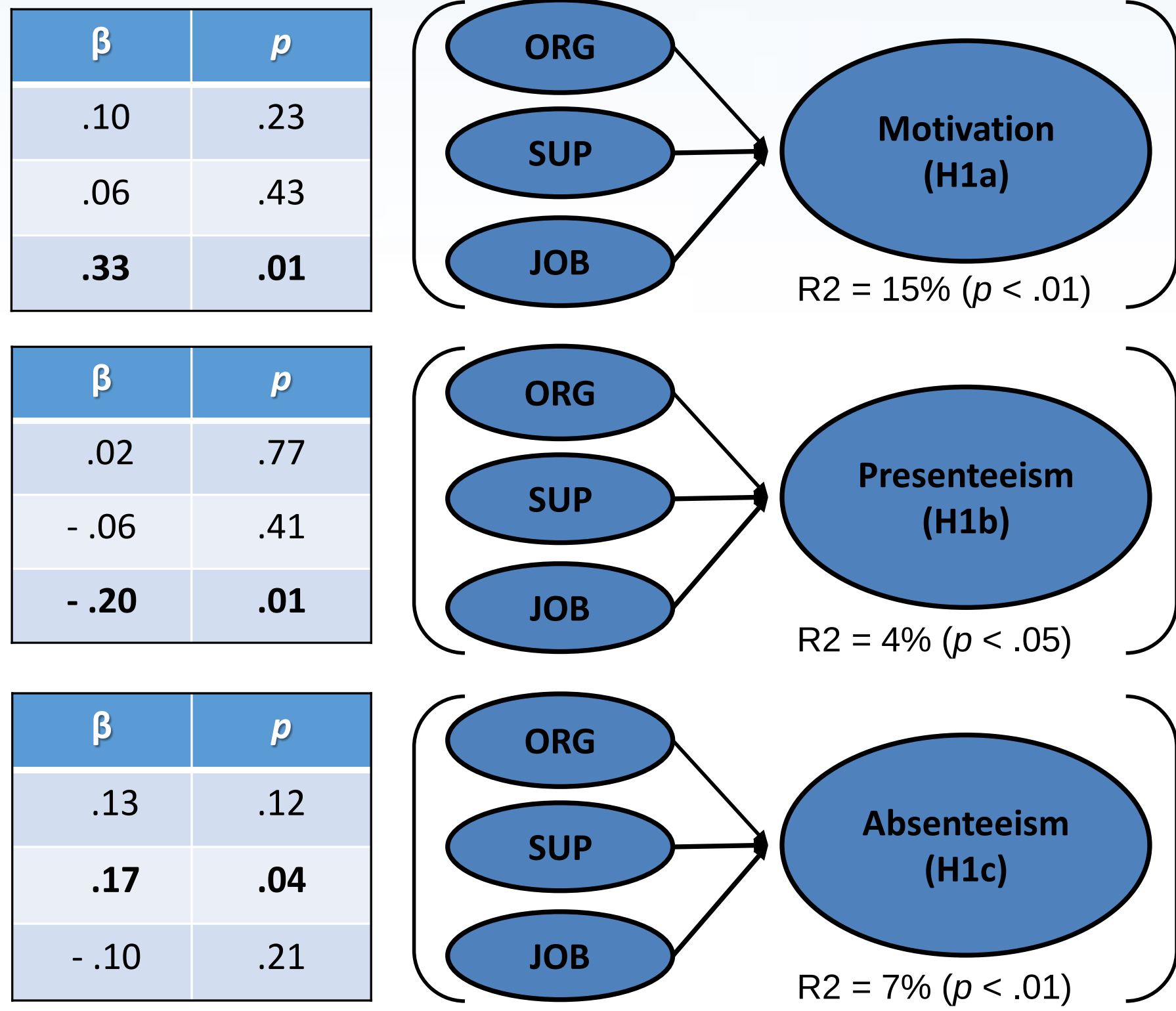
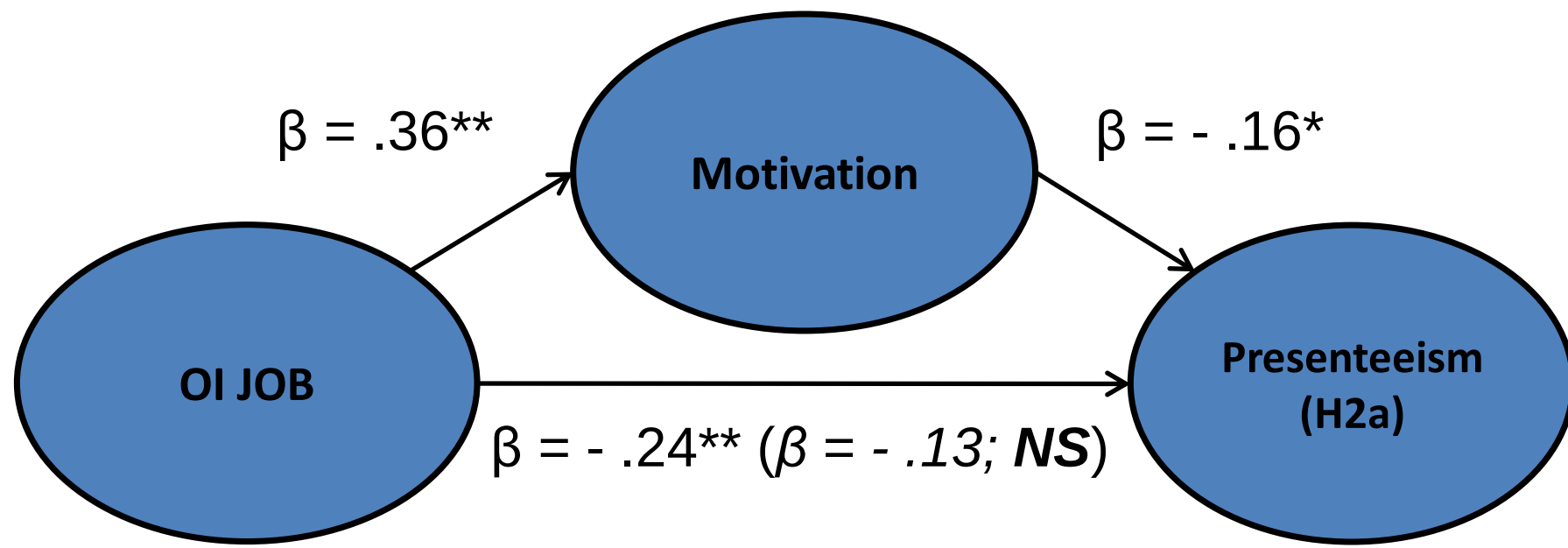


Figure 3: Indirect effect of OI JOB on presenteeism (through motivation)



Note. * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; Sobel test: -2.12 ($p < .05$).

- DISCUSSION -

Concerning objective 1.

- Results show partial support to the a of foci approach to study the influence of OI on employees attendance behaviours (H1a, b, c partially supported).
- The choice to be present at work (even when sick) seems to be mainly driven by the level of identification one holds toward his job.
- The choice to be absent from work seems to be mainly driven by the level of identification one holds toward his supervisor.
- Taken separately, the OI ORG foci doesn't seem to account much of variance in the choice to be present (even when sick) or absent from work.

Concerning objective 2.

- OI JOB best predictor of motivation and presenteeism (even after combined effects and variables rotation). People with high OI JOB find their work more meaningful Thus show more attendance and less presenteeism.
- OI SUP best predictor of absenteeism (even after combined effects and variables rotation). People with high OI SUP are at ease with supervisor style. They have a better understanding of the costs and benefits of being absent from work.

Concerning objective 3.

- Motivation fully mediate the OI relationship (JOB) and presenteeism. The fact that people with greater OI JOB report less presenteeism comes from their motivation.

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