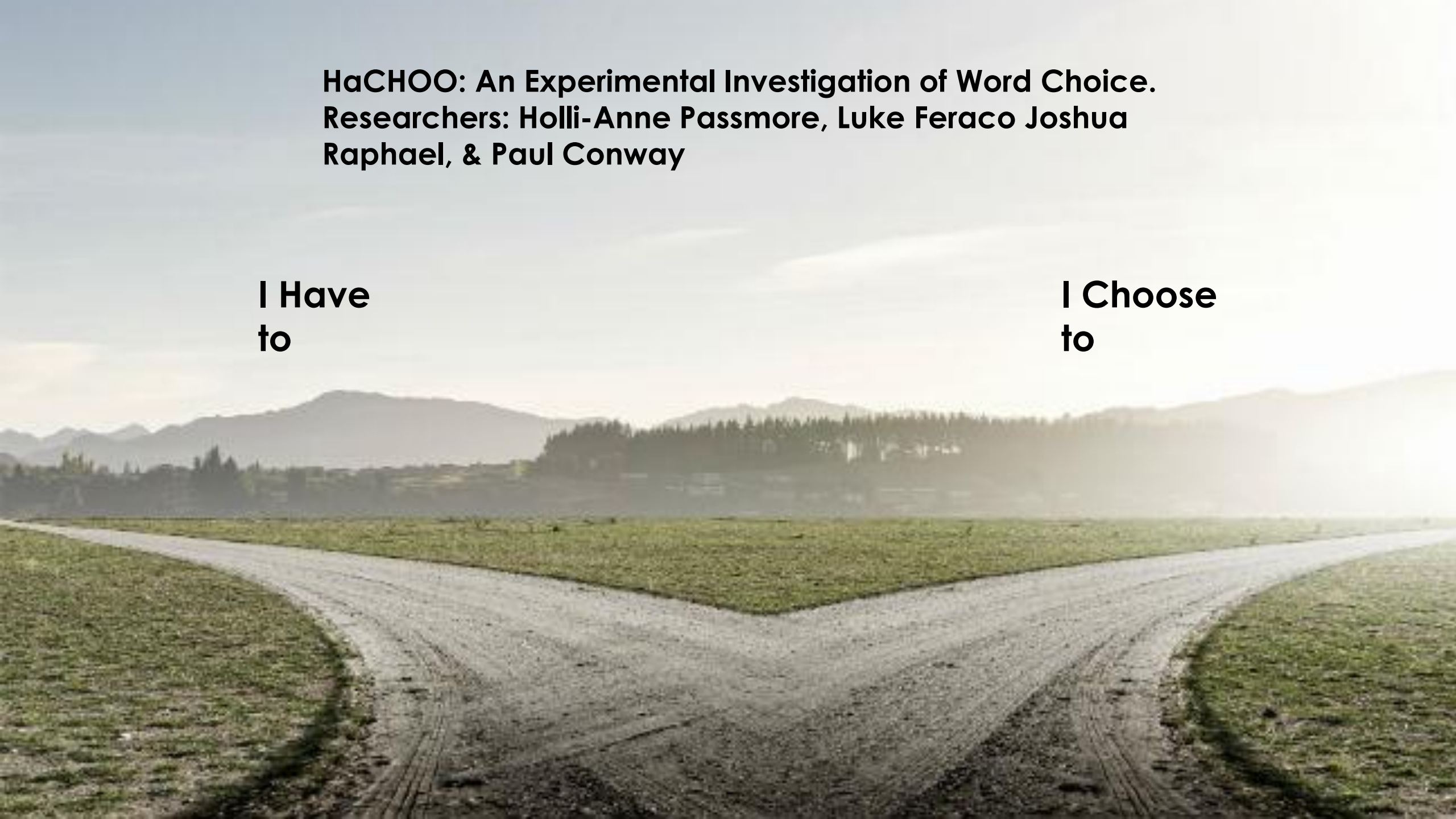


HaCHOO: An Experimental Investigation of Word Choice.
Researchers: Holli-Anne Passmore, Luke Feraco Joshua
Raphael, & Paul Conway

**I Have
to**

**I Choose
to**





Purpose of HaChoo Study

- The potential psychological impact of changing the effect of changing one's word choice is described elegantly by Julian Jaynes (1920-1977), who wrote: "Word changes are concept changes and concept changes are behavioural changes."
- To see the effect of changing word choice on participants overall satisfaction for basic need of autonomy
- We hypothesized that reappraising activities as choice as opposed to have to, should, or must, will enhance feelings of autonomy
- In turn boosting well-being (i.e., positive emotions, satisfaction with life, meaning life)



Autonomy



- ▶ Autonomy is described in self-determination theory, (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 2000) as the universal urge to be casual agents of one's own life and act in harmony with one's integrated self
- ▶ Autonomy is one of the three basic needs that must be satisfied for flourishing to occur (Deci & Ryan 2000)
- ▶ Flourishing refers to a combination of feeling good and functioning effectively and is synonymous with high level of mental well-being (SDT: Deci & Ryan (2000)




The Impact of Word Choice

- The impact of word choice on cognitive appraisal, autonomy, and overall flourishing has not been explored empirically
- Although the APA in 2003 estimated 87% of therapists used cognitive reappraisal in treatment of patients
- Cognitive appraisal therapy is foundational to Rational Emotive Therapy (REBT; Ellis 1998, 2001) and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT; 2005)



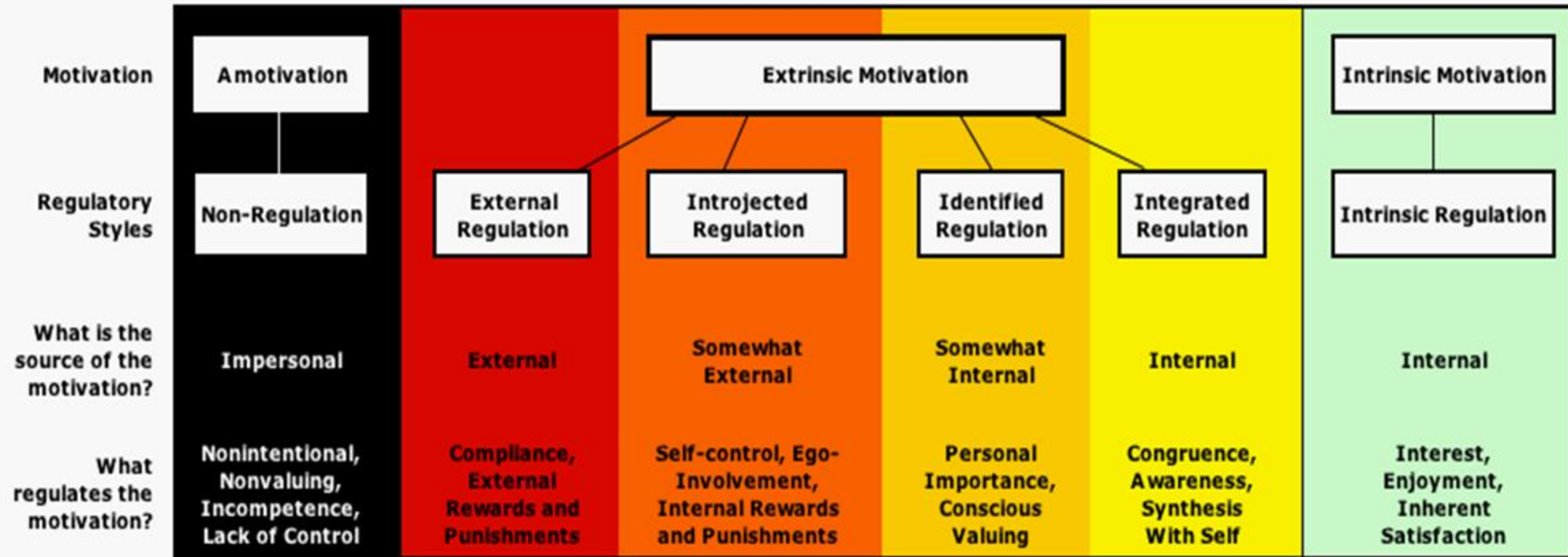
Cognitive Reappraisal Therapy

- Is Made up of two components
 - 1. Cognitive appraisal of person's subjective interpretation of an event and it's resulting emotional reaction
 - 2. Cognitive reappraisal is the changing of one's personal interpretation of an event
 - Objective: changing the initial emotional reaction to a more facilitative one.
- 

The Self-Determination Continuum

Nonself-Determined

Self-Determined



(Based on Ryan, R.M. & Deci, E.L. (2000). Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being. American Psychologist. 55(1), 68-78.)



The Self-Determination Continuum (Deci & Ryan 2000)

- The initial cognitive appraisal process “I have to” condition being examined in the HaChoo study is an extrinsic mode of motivation
- Falling within one of the two categories out of the four types of motivation
- External regulated and introjected regulation
- External regulated is when the primary driving factor is compliance, external rewards and punishments.
- Introjected regulation driven by self-control, ego involvement, internal rewards and punishments




The Self-Determination Continuum (Deci and Ryan 2000)

- Whereas when the independent variable of changing the cognitive process from I have to/should/must is applied
- Theoretically, as stated by Julian Jaynes (1976) “word changes are concept changes and concept changes are behavioural changes.”
- If this assertion turns out to be correct. Thus, changing to “I choose” should influence participants decision making to be more autonomous
- As the statement “I choose to” is an affirmative statement about what the participant is deciding to do



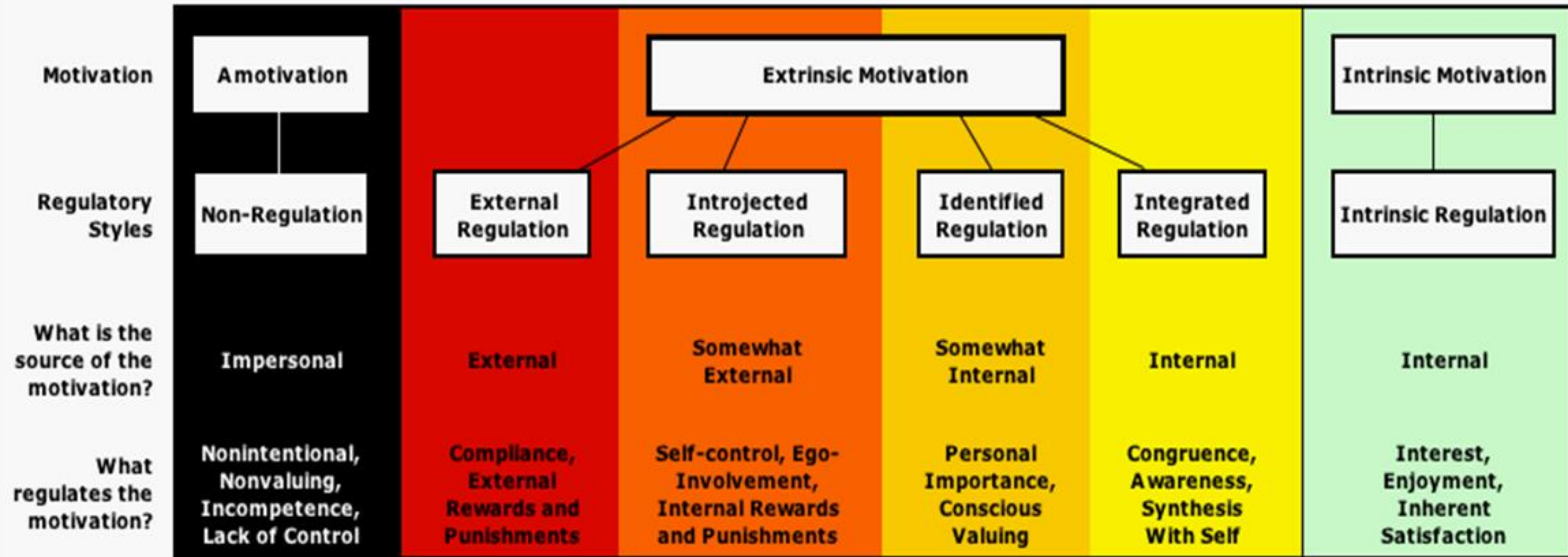
From External to Internal

- Cognitive reappraising externally regulated decisions to be more autonomous could lead to great enjoyment of activities
 - This greater enjoyment could lead to an increase in intrinsic motivation towards the tasks and activities themselves
 - Intrinsic motivation is “the natural inclination towards assimilation mastery, spontaneous interest and exploration that is so essential to cognitive and social development and vitality throughout life” (Deci & Ryan 2000)
 - Intrinsic motivation is cross-culturally is linked to improved academic performance (Taylor et al. 2014)
- 

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Making the Decision to Choose Autonomy

- The decision to be intrinsically motivated about everything in life may seem unrealistic, as many times some things are simply externally forced upon us
- Intrinsic motivation is less about the idea of enjoying the drudgery and harshness of life, but instead about embracing your own autonomy
- It is the idea of making voluntary conscious decisions and finding reasons for those choices that makes one intrinsically motivated



Making the Decision to Live Authentically

- This autonomous form of decision making formalized most prominently by the Self-Determination Theory of Ryan and Deci (2000) shows many similarities with the philosophy of existentialism
- Existentialism “is concerned with finding self and meaning of life through free will, choice and, personal responsibility,” (Columbia Dictionary 1995)
- Often when tasks are viewed through I have to/should/must paradigm, the existentialist would state that is a form of bad faith
- Bad faith “is the phenomenon in which human beings, under pressure from social forces, adopt false values and disown their own innate freedom hence acting inauthentically”



The Conditions

- Based on this background we randomly assigned the participants to three conditions
- Do nothing condition (control) $n=62$
- I have to/should/must $n=69$
- I choose to, or I am choosing to $n=78$

- Total sample $N=209$



Do Nothing Condition (Control)

- **Instructions: For you to do over the course of the next week**

You will receive your Word choice assignment in one week's time. For this week, just go about your everyday routine as normal.

One week from today you will receive an email for Part 2



I Have to/Should/Must condition

➤ **Instructions for you to do over the course of the next week**

For the next week pay attention to when you think or say the phrase

“ I have to/should/must...”

Each day note down how many times you think or say this and note down which activities this is in reference to, Also, pay attention to and note down how thinking or saying this phrase makes you feel.

One week from today you will receive an email for Part 2



I Choose/Choosing to Condition

➤ **Instructions for you to do over the course of the next week**

For the next week pay attention to when you think or say the phrase

“ I have to/should/must...”

Each time you catch yourself saying or thinking this change that to

“I choose to...” or “I am choosing to ...”

Each day note down how many times this occurs, and note down which activities this is in reference to. Also, pay attention to and note down how switching to thinking or saying “I *choose* to...” or “I am *choosing* to..” makes you feel

One week from today you will receive an email for Part 2



Pre-post intervention assessments

- Addressed positive and negative emotions, satisfaction with life, meaning in life, satisfaction of basic needs, autonomy, autonomous functioning, authenticity and self-concordant motivation. Post-intervention qualitative questions included
- To what extent did you find yourself procrastinating on these activities for which you thought or said “I have to/should/must... “compared to other activities in your life?
- Did you change any activities over the course of the past week as a result of this study?
- Please describe how or if your attitude towards or energy for these activities changed as a result of switching to saying or thinking “I choose to”.
- Did you learn anything from this study?



Making the Decision to Live Authentically

- ▶ The world often seems to become more complicated by the day. With increasing complex social rules and conventions that seem necessary to engage in. The idea of choice can seem like a foreign concept at times,
- ▶ With one being a passive recipient tasked with having to/musting and shoulding our way through life with limited autonomy. Yet as an active participant, as someone that views the choices of life through an “I choose” perspective
- ▶ It become apparent that many of our greatest struggles and limitations are not created by society but are self-imposed
- ▶ Driven by our fear to express our own innate freedom and authenticity