

Investigating the “we” in me: Within-person fluctuations in organizational identification

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Introduction

Organizational identification (OID) is a component of organizational attachment reflecting the degree to which individuals consider their membership to a specific organization as self-defining.^{1,2}

- To date, research has treated OID as a static construct, assuming that it remains temporally stable over time once initially established.^{3,4}
- However, several theorists have raised the possibility that OID could be more dynamic than traditionally thought, at least when examined in the short term.^{3, 5-7}

The Current Research

Using an experience-sampling daily diary design, we examine the extent to which employees fluctuate in their daily level of OID and test potential predictors and outcomes of these within-person changes.

Background

OID as dynamic in the short-term

OID has its roots in the social identity approach, which includes social identity theory⁸ and self-categorization theory.⁹ Within this approach, social identification is conceptualized as being dynamic and situational.²

- Since OID is a specific kind of social identification,¹ the notion that it may vary within-person in the short-term would be in line with this broader approach.¹⁰

Within-person antecedents of OID

Motivated identity construction theory¹¹ states that individuals are motivated to construct identities that provide them with a sense of identity motive satisfaction.

- Research shows that within-person changes in individuals' perceptions that a group allows them to do so predicts within-person changes in how much they identify with that group.¹²

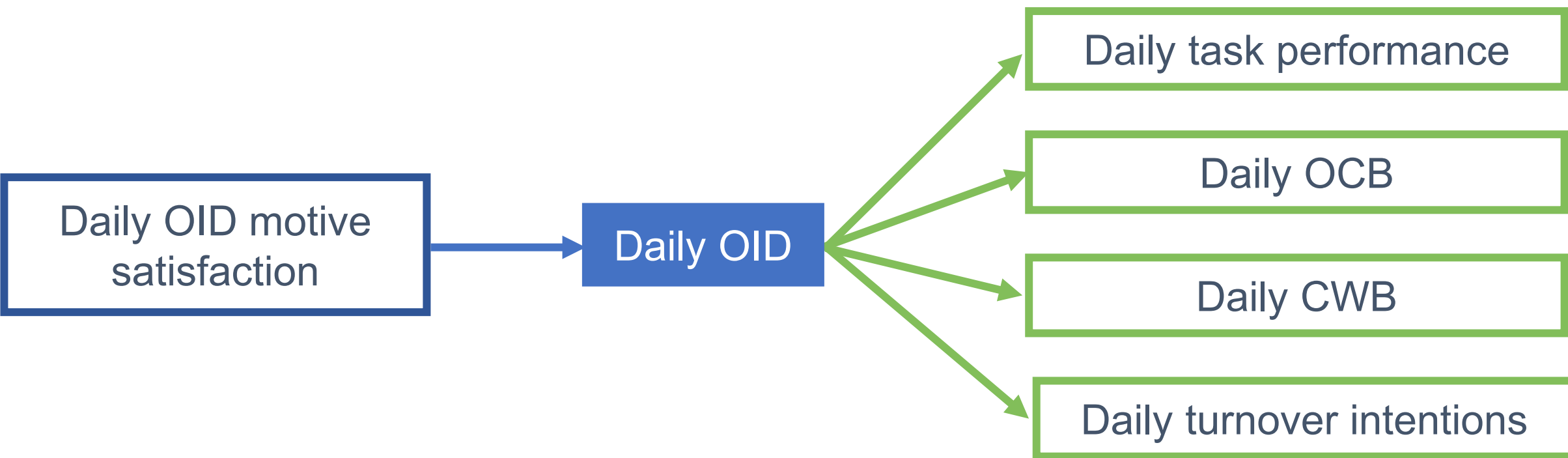
Four OID motives (i.e., psychological *needs* driving intentions and behavior) have been proposed to drive OID: depersonalized belongingness uncertainty reduction, self-enhancement, and self-consistency.¹³

- In line with research suggesting that employee need satisfaction at work can vary daily,^{14,15} within-person changes in daily OID motive satisfaction may predict within-person changes in daily OID.

Within-person outcomes of OID

Between-person research has yielded substantial evidence of the beneficial outcomes associated with OID – in particular, OID has been shown to predict job performance (i.e., organizational citizenship behavior, counterproductive work behavior, task performance) and turnover intentions.

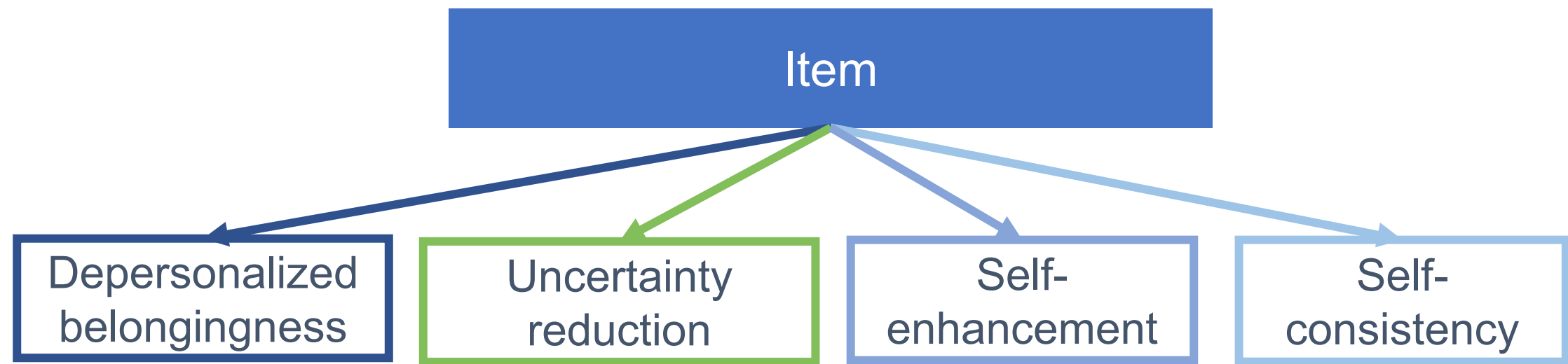
- Given research showing that these outcomes vary within-person daily,^{16,17} within-person changes in daily OID could predict within-person changes in daily job performance and turnover intentions.



Pilot Study

Purpose: Select and validate items assessing the four OID motives

Procedure: A pool of 39 items from plausible proxy scales was assembled. Five items were also created for each OID motive and added to the pool. Subject matter experts (*N* = 20) were given the definition of each motive and asked to select the motive that best reflected each item.



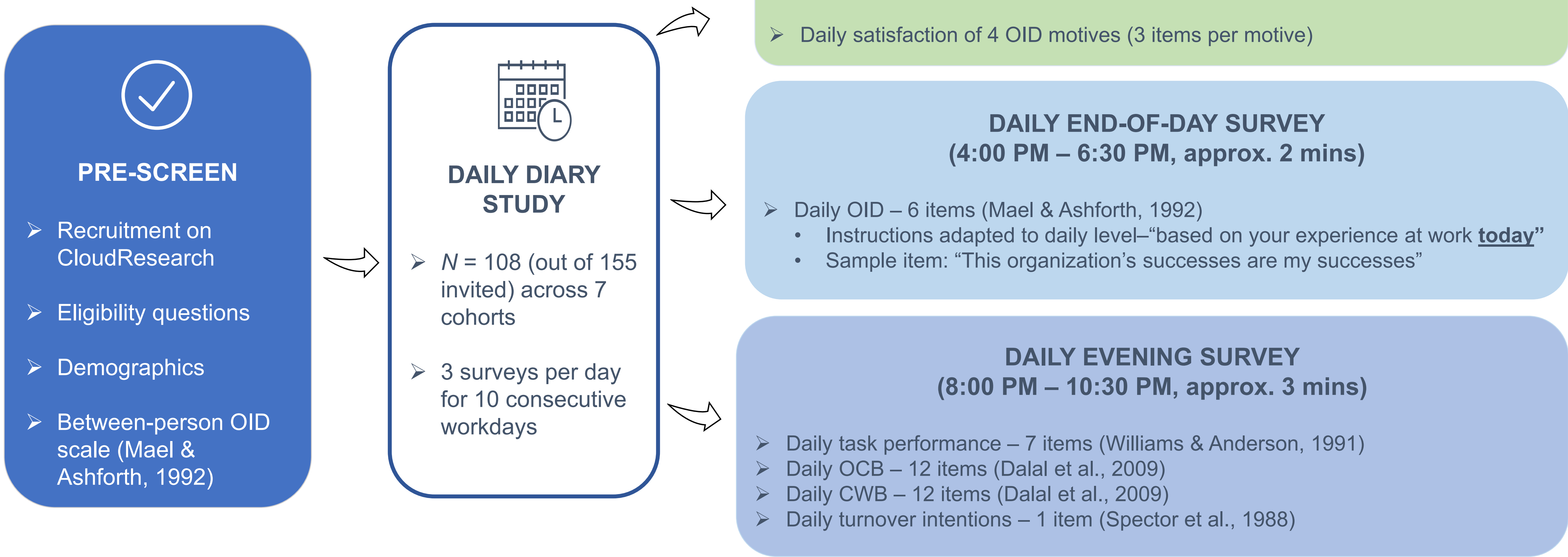
Results: Pilot Study

The substantive validity of each item was calculated.^{18, 19}

For each OID motive, three substantively valid items were retained for use in the daily diary study

OID Motive	Sample Item
Depersonalized belongingness	I feel like a real part of this organization. ²⁰
Uncertainty reduction	I feel uncertain about being a representative organizational member. ²¹
Self-enhancement	People in my community think highly of my organization. ²²
Self-consistency	My membership to this organization gives me a context for expressing my true self.

Daily Diary Study



Preliminary Results: Daily Diary Study

The data has a nested structure – daily observations (level 1) nested within person (level 2).

	Intercept (γ_{00})	Within-person variance (σ)	Between-person variance (τ)	ICC ^a	Residual ICC ^b
Daily OID motive satisfaction	0.02	0.08	0.46	0.86	0.14
Daily OID	3.59	0.07	0.87	0.93	0.08
Daily task performance	5.93	0.21	0.53	0.72	0.29
Daily OCB	4.09	0.30	2.20	0.88	0.12
Daily CWB	1.98	0.17	1.86	0.92	0.09
Daily turnover intentions	1.95	0.28	1.54	0.85	0.15

Table 1. Variance components of within-person variables

^a ICC = intraclass correlation coefficient – the proportion of between-person variance relative to total variance. Represents $\tau/(\sigma + \tau)$.

^b Residual ICC = the proportion of within-person variance relative to total variance. Represents $\sigma/(\sigma + \tau)$.

Remaining Analyses

Data analysis in progress; results pending.

To account for dependency in the data, multilevel modeling will be used to test the hypothesized relationships.

Predictors will be person-mean centered to allow for an examination of within-person fluctuations and their effects uncontaminated by between-person differences.

Using full maximum likelihood estimation, a set of nested models differing in complexity incrementally will be run.

- Models will specify fixed, and then random, slopes.
- Deviance tests will be used to determine if the added complexity can be considered statistically justified.

Bootstrapping will be used to compute confidence intervals and test the statistical significance of the indirect effects between the daily satisfaction of OID motives, OID, and outcomes.

Discussion

Research has examined between-person predictors and outcomes of OID, but we still know little about how it unfolds within-person over the course of everyday organizational life.

By using an experience-sampling daily diary design, the present research will add to current theoretical understanding of the temporal dynamics of OID.

- It examines the degree to which the common assumption that OID is stable in the short-term is justified and will test if relationships observed in between-person research hold on a within-person level.

Practically, it may help refine current knowledge of daily factors influencing day-to-day job performance and turnover intentions.

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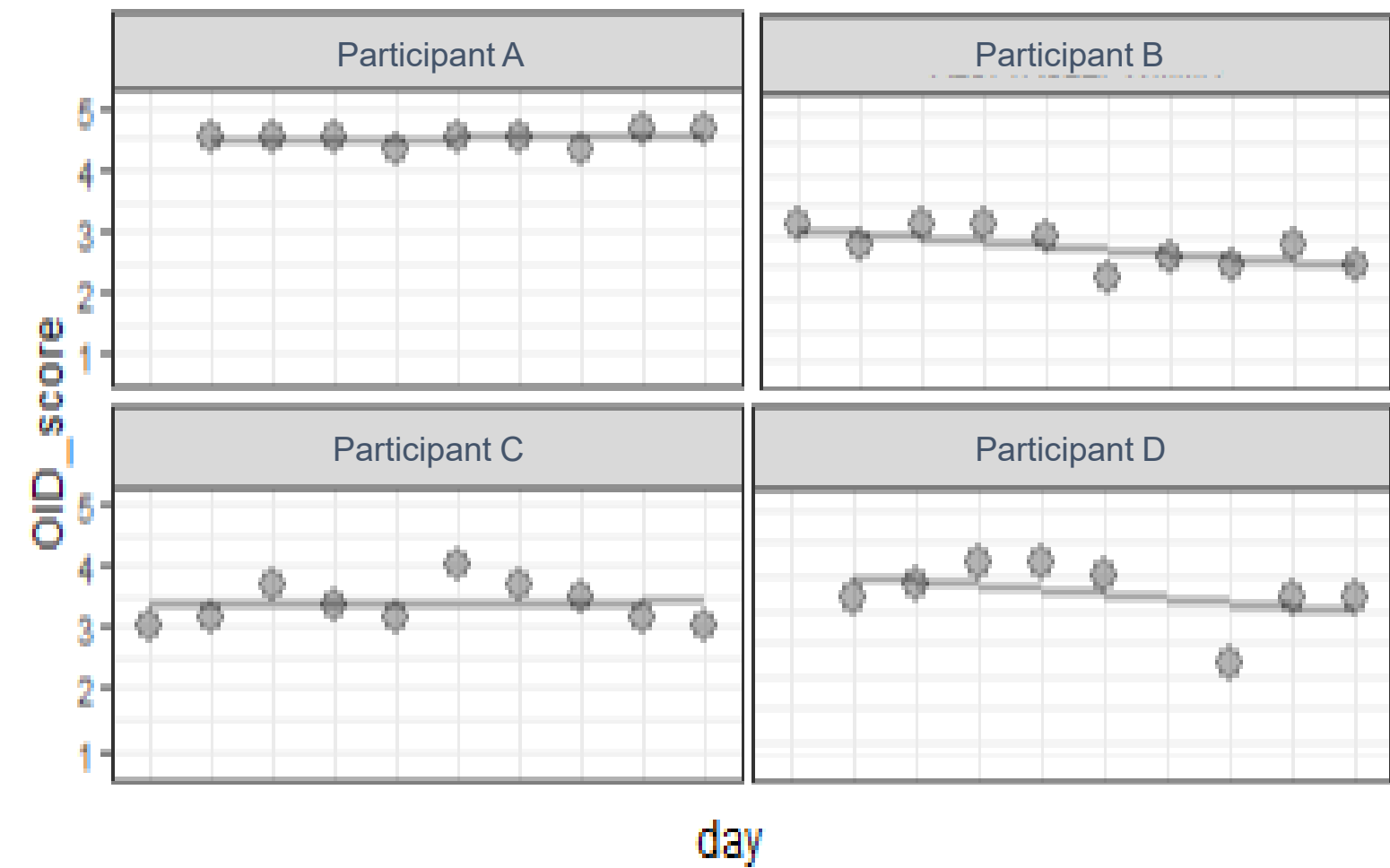


Figure 1. Daily OID scores for a subset of four participants