How diversity frames influence support for diversity initiatives

The role of psychological standing

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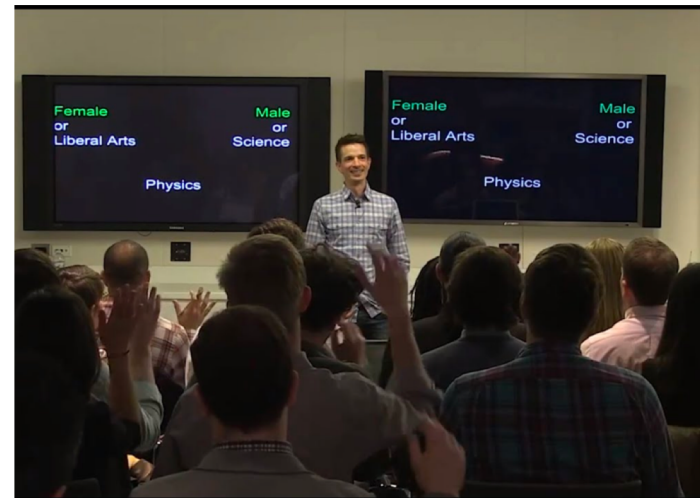
Diversity is on the corporate mind

- From 2014 to 2017, the proportion of executives who cited inclusion as a top priority rose by 32%

- 69% of executives rated diversity and inclusion an important issue (up from 59 percent in 2014)
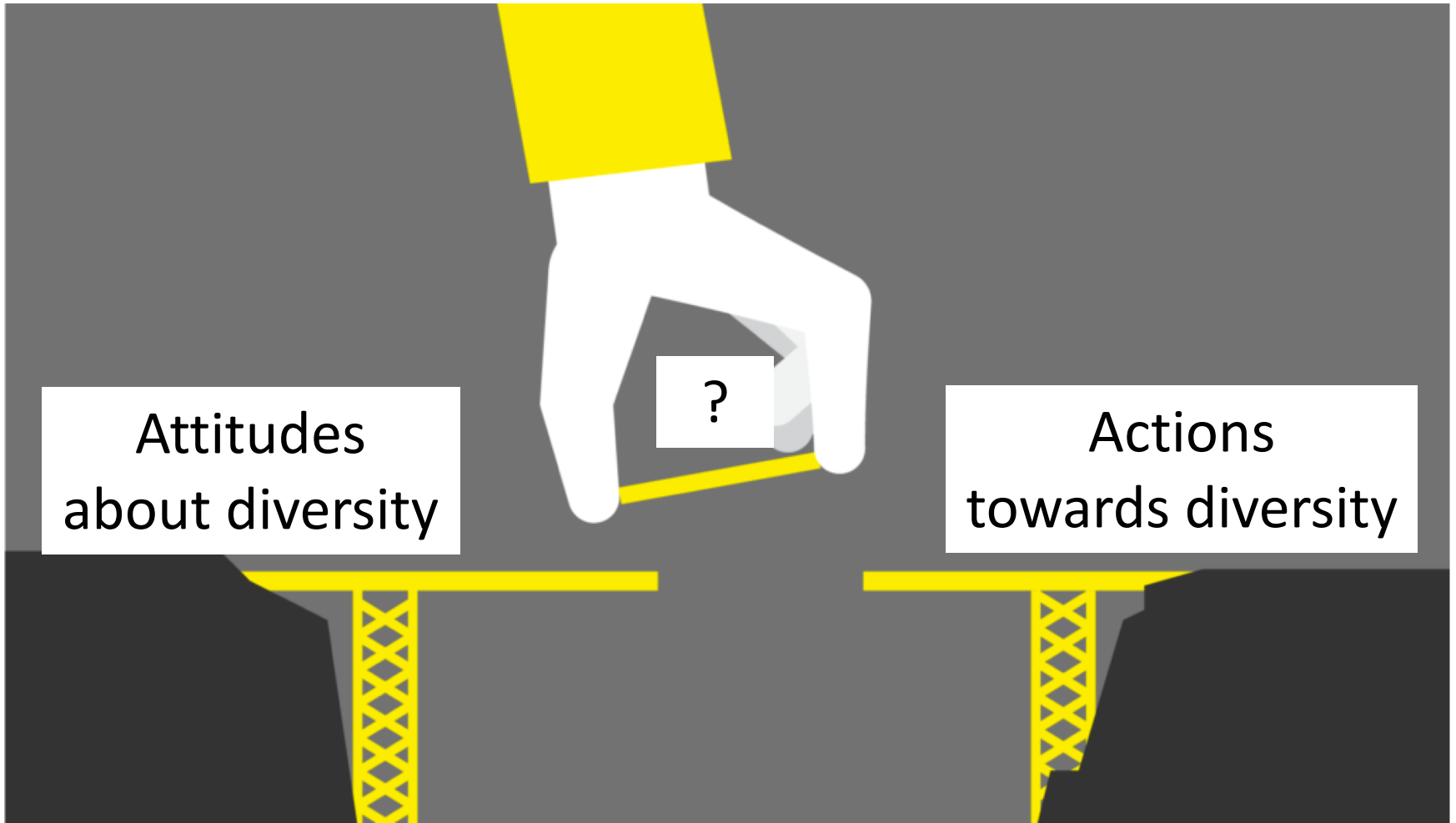

People & Culture

eBay's First Chief Diversity Officer on Humanizing Diversity and Inclusion

Deloitte Human Capital Trends (2017)

Psychological standing (Ratner & Miller, 2001)

"A feeling of legitimacy or entitlement to act on an issue"

• Typically obtained from having:

    o Material stake

       You have a material interest in [supporting diversity].
       There is a tangible benefit to [supporting diversity].

    o Moral stake

       You [support diversity] based on your moral values.
       Your moral values are aligned with [supporting diversity].

Effron & Miller (2012); Miller et al. (2009); Morrison (2011); Sherf et al. (2017)

Roadmap

Study 1 — What does psychological standing (PS) predict?

Study 2 — How do justifications of diversity affect PS and behavioral outcomes?

Study 3 — How does changing who is included in diversity affect PS and behavioral outcomes?

Study 4 — Which frames clash? Which frames complement each other?

Study 1: What does psychological standing predict?

- 403 MTurkers (48.9% White, 46.7% female, M_{age} = 36.4)

> *You work for a Fortune-500 Company… the CEO has requested volunteers to form a special task force… regarding policy changes to improve racial diversity and inclusivity at the company.*
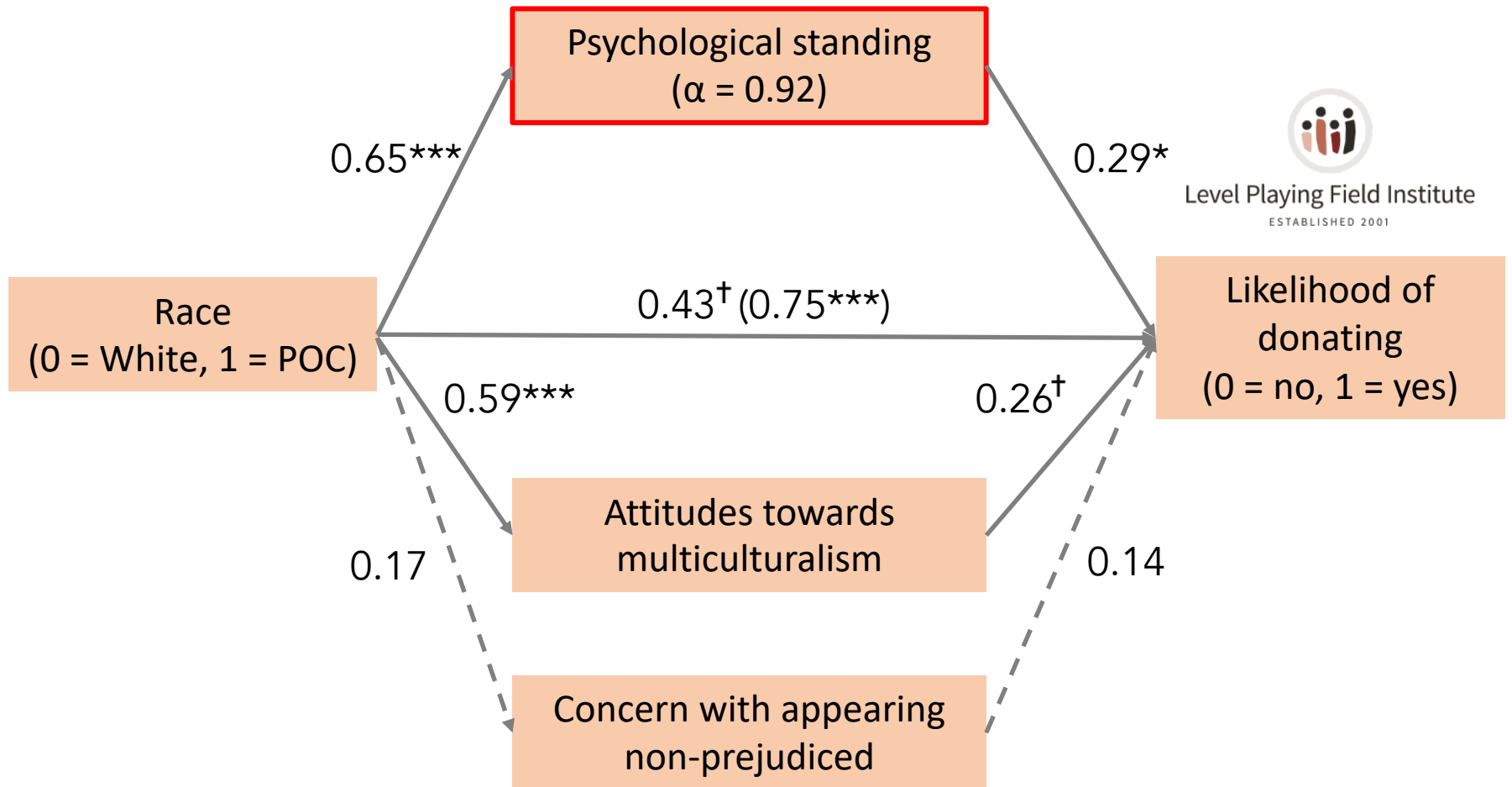
Adapted from Sherf et al. (2017)

- Key measures
  1. Psychological standing
  2. Likelihood of donating
  3. Donation amount

Level Playing Field Institute
ESTABLISHED 2001

Psychological standing
(α = 0.92)

Race
(0 = White, 1 = POC)

Likelihood of
donating
(0 = no, 1 = yes)

Attitudes towards
multiculturalism

Concern with appearing
non-prejudiced

0.65***

0.29*

0.43† (0.75***)

0.59***

0.26†

0.17

0.14

Level Playing Field Institute
ESTABLISHED 2001

R^2 = 0.114

Unstandardized coefficients

Study 2: Justifications of diversity

Business frame

JPMorgan Chase & Co.

"Creating a diverse and inclusive environment is critical to our success... Our diverse workforce helps our customers and business partners achieve their business goals."

Moral frame

salesforce

"Inequality is an issue that every company must address for its own benefit and to create a better world. We believe businesses need to focus on closing the Equality gap with the same energy put into creating new products and markets."

The CEO has stressed that diversity is… in the company's financial interest/morally right thing to do.

The CEO mentions that as a global-reaching business/socially responsible business, it is necessary to ensure that the workplace reflects the diversity of the customer base/all groups can benefit from the opportunities the industry is creating
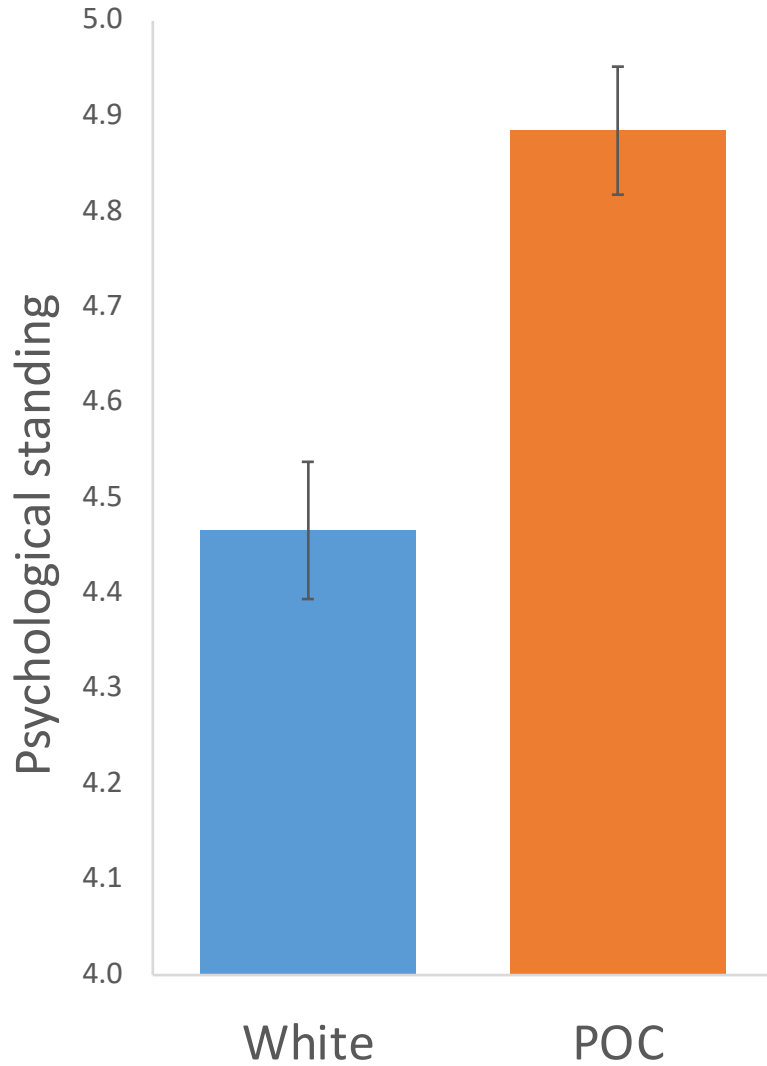
Control (*n* = 174)

Same vignette as Study 1

Business (*n* = 164)

Moral (*n* = 155)

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Whites perceive less standing on diversity than POC

Psychological standing (y-axis: 4.0 to 5.0)

White, POC

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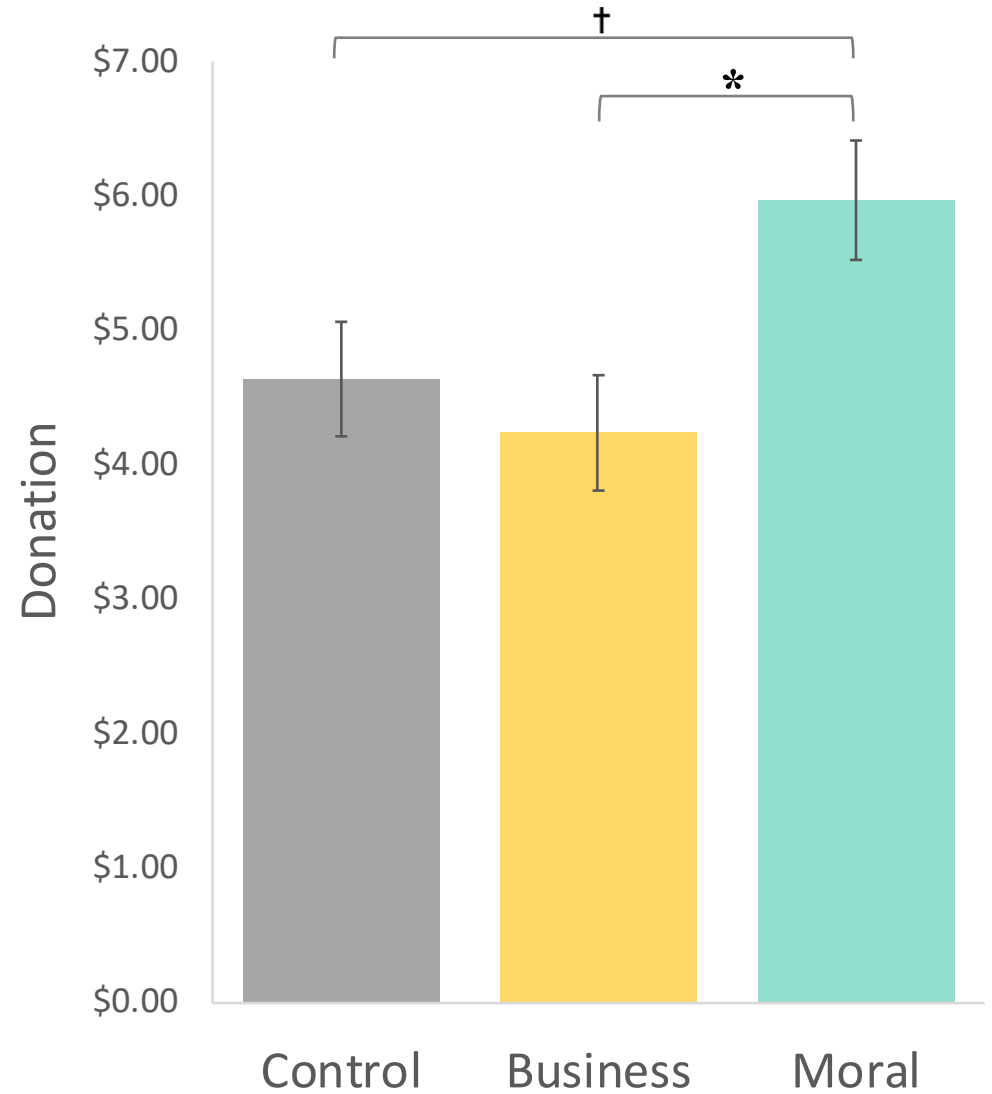
$t(488) = 4.26, p < .001, d = 0.382$

Participants who read that diversity is the "morally right thing to do" donated the most

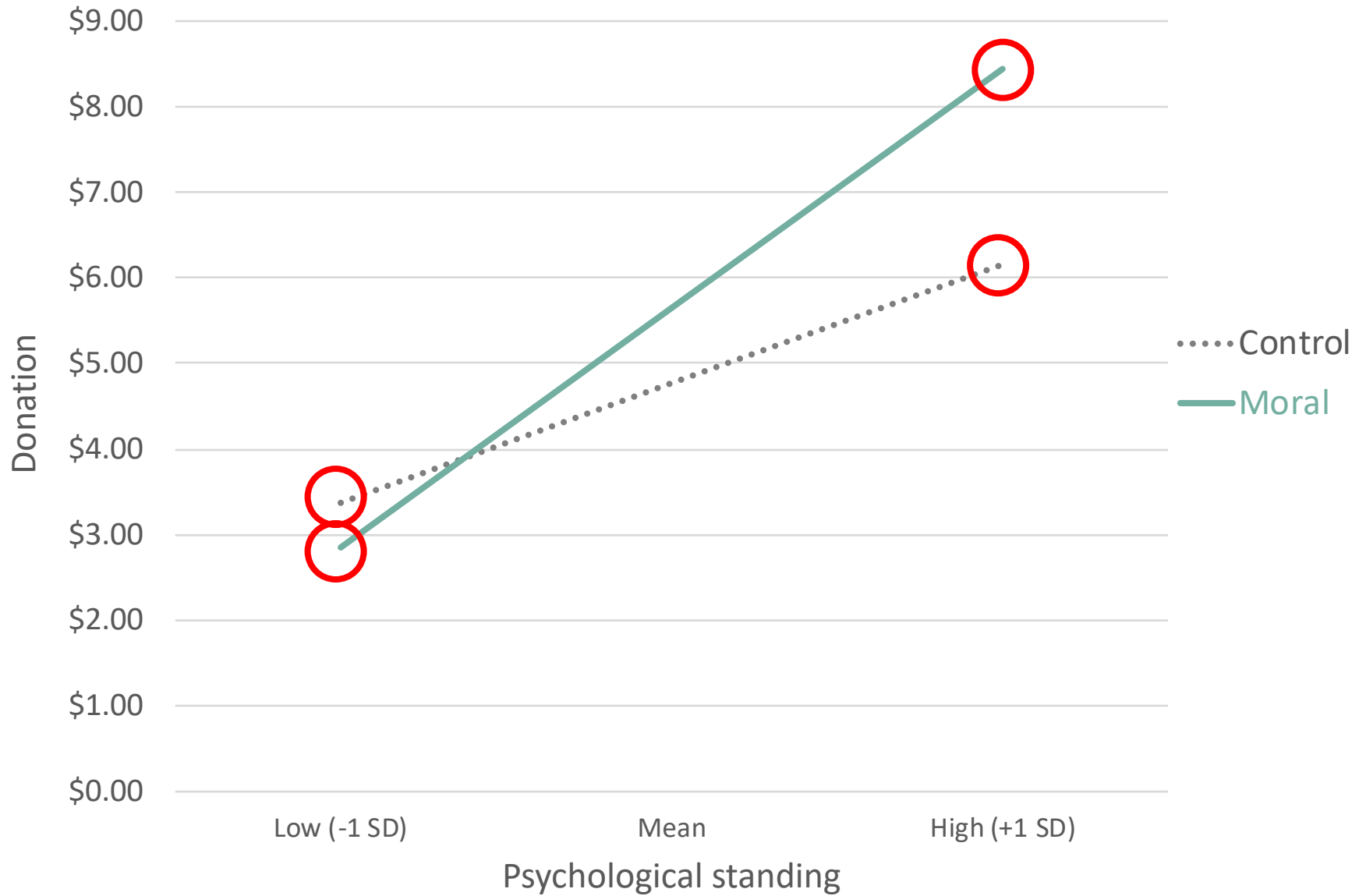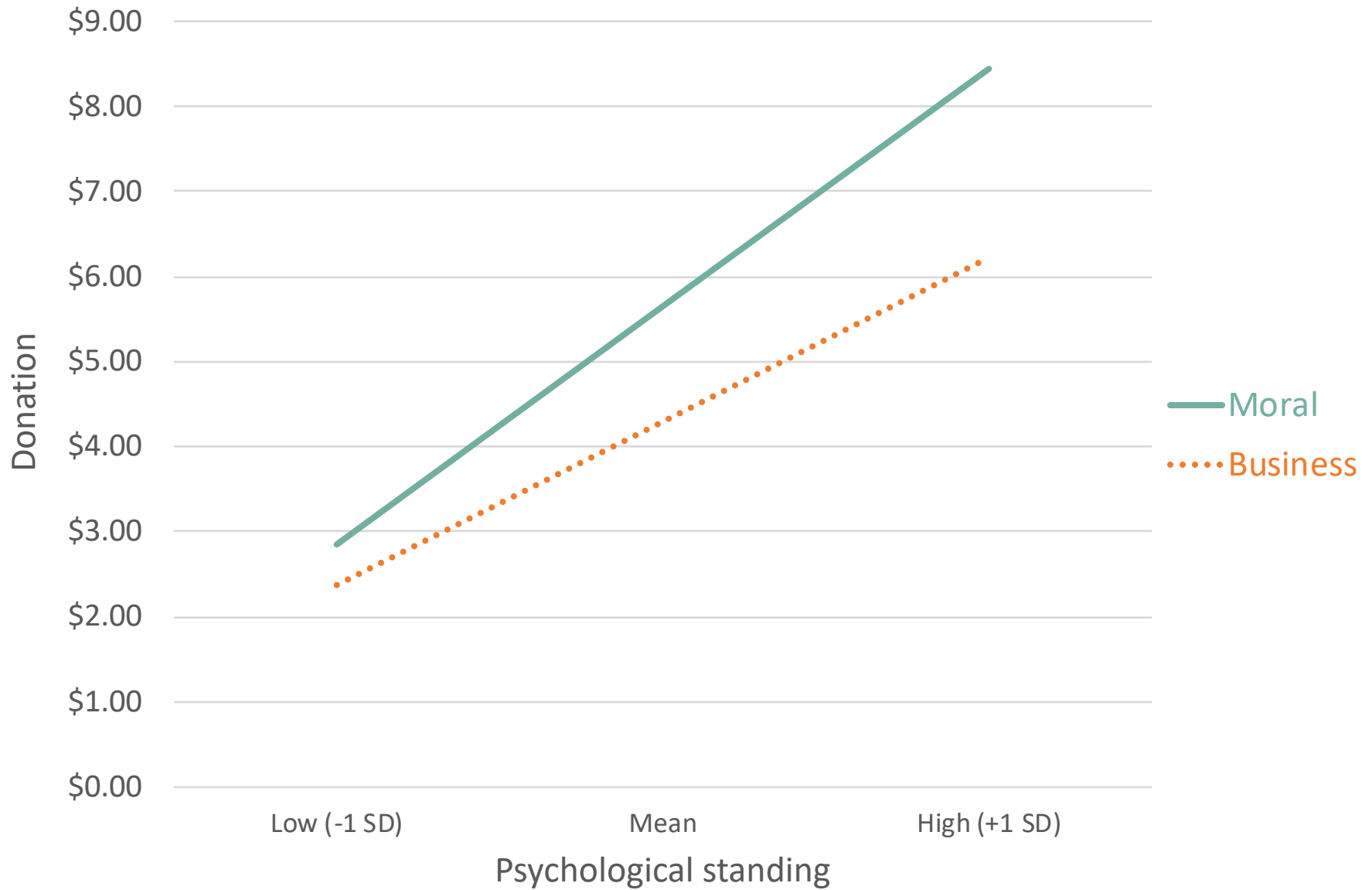Donation (y-axis: $0.00 to $7.00)

Control, Business, Moral

† *

$F(2, 490) = 4.25, p = .015, \eta^2 = 0.017$

Moral vs. control

Moral vs. business

Donation (y-axis): $0.00, $1.00, $2.00, $3.00, $4.00, $5.00, $6.00, $7.00, $8.00, $9.00

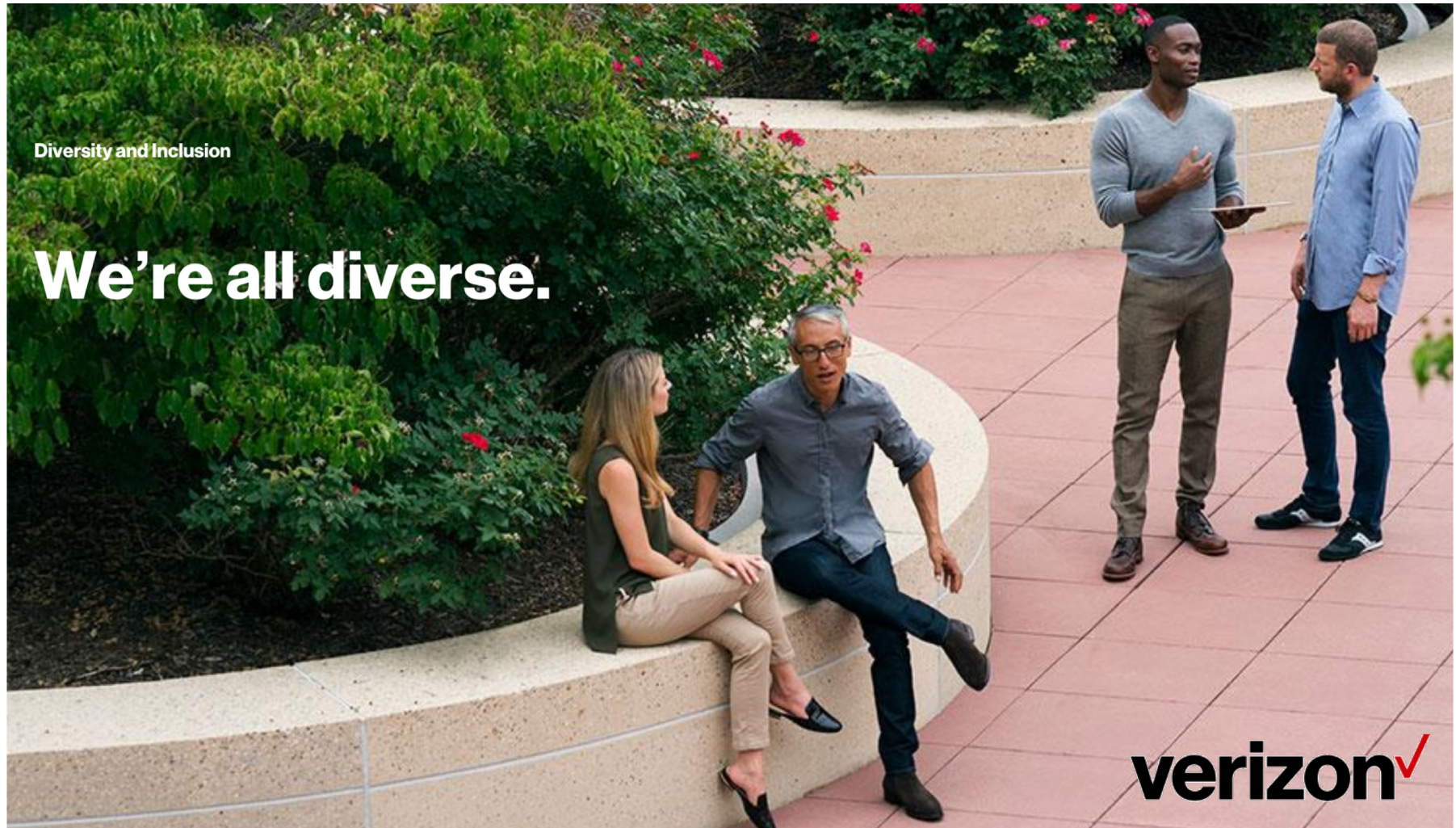Psychological standing (x-axis): Low (-1 SD), Mean, High (+1 SD)

Legend: Moral, Business

Study 3: Who is included in "diversity"?

White Americans' reactions to diversity framing

- White Americans…
  o Perceive diversity as a threat
  o Feel excluded by diversity
  o See diversity as more relevant to minorities

- Whites' attitudes towards diversity can be improved by framing it as explicitly inclusive of Whites

e.g. Craig & Richeson (2014); Dover et al. (2016); Jansen et al. (2015); Major, Blodorn, & Blascovich (2016); Morrison, Plaut, & Ybarra (2010); Morrison & Wynn (2016); Plaut et al. (2011)

… the CEO has specifically requested both White and racial minority volunteers for the special task force. Your manager emphasized that the CEO believes that all employees, Whites and racial minorities alike, should be involved…

Control (*n* = 174)

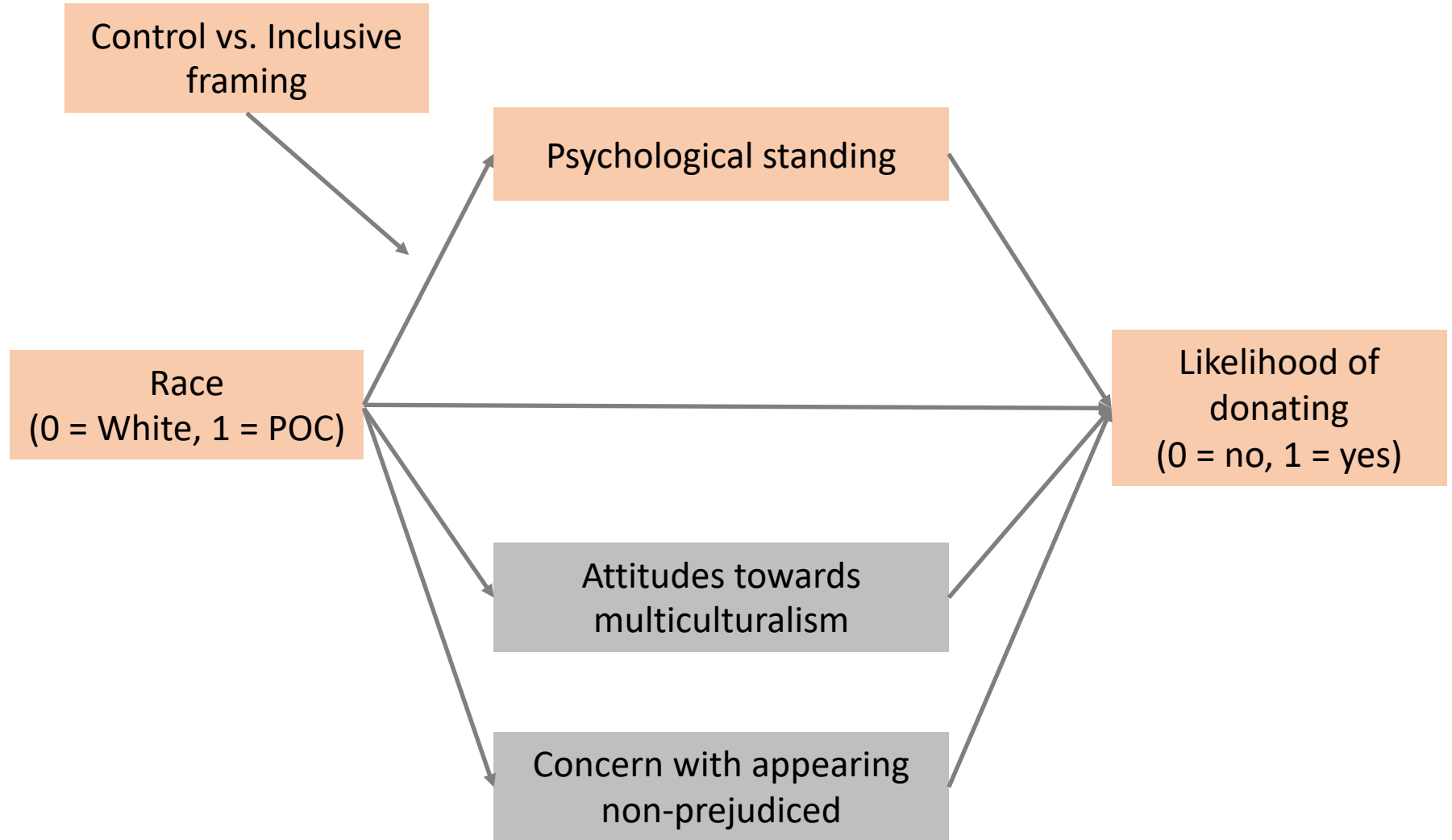Same vignette as Study 1

(All) Inclusive (*n* = 164)

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Inclusive framing attenuates the race gap in psychological standing
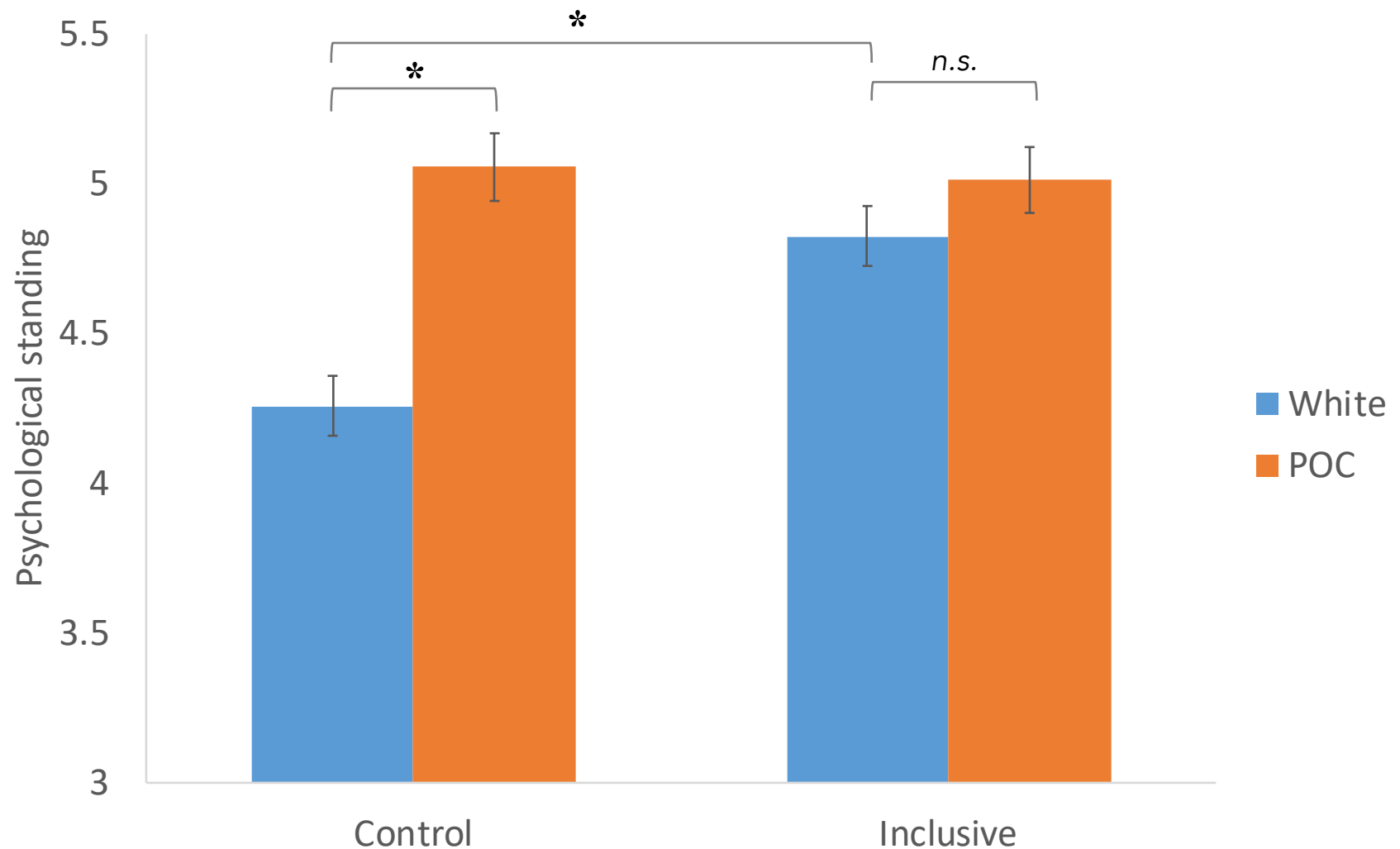
$F(1,463) = 8.254$, $p = .004$, $\eta^2 = 0.018$

Study 4: Which frames clash/complement?

"Diversity isn't a box to check, it's our secret formula for inventing the future of sport... Every innovation starts with seeing a problem through fresh eyes...

We're proud of our German heritage, but the truth is we've been an international company from the very start. When you walk through the halls, you hear voices in German and English, but also Spanish, Hindi and Cantonese."

Diversity justifications and inclusive language interact

$F(1,495) = 8.936$, $p = .003$, $\eta^2 = 0.018$
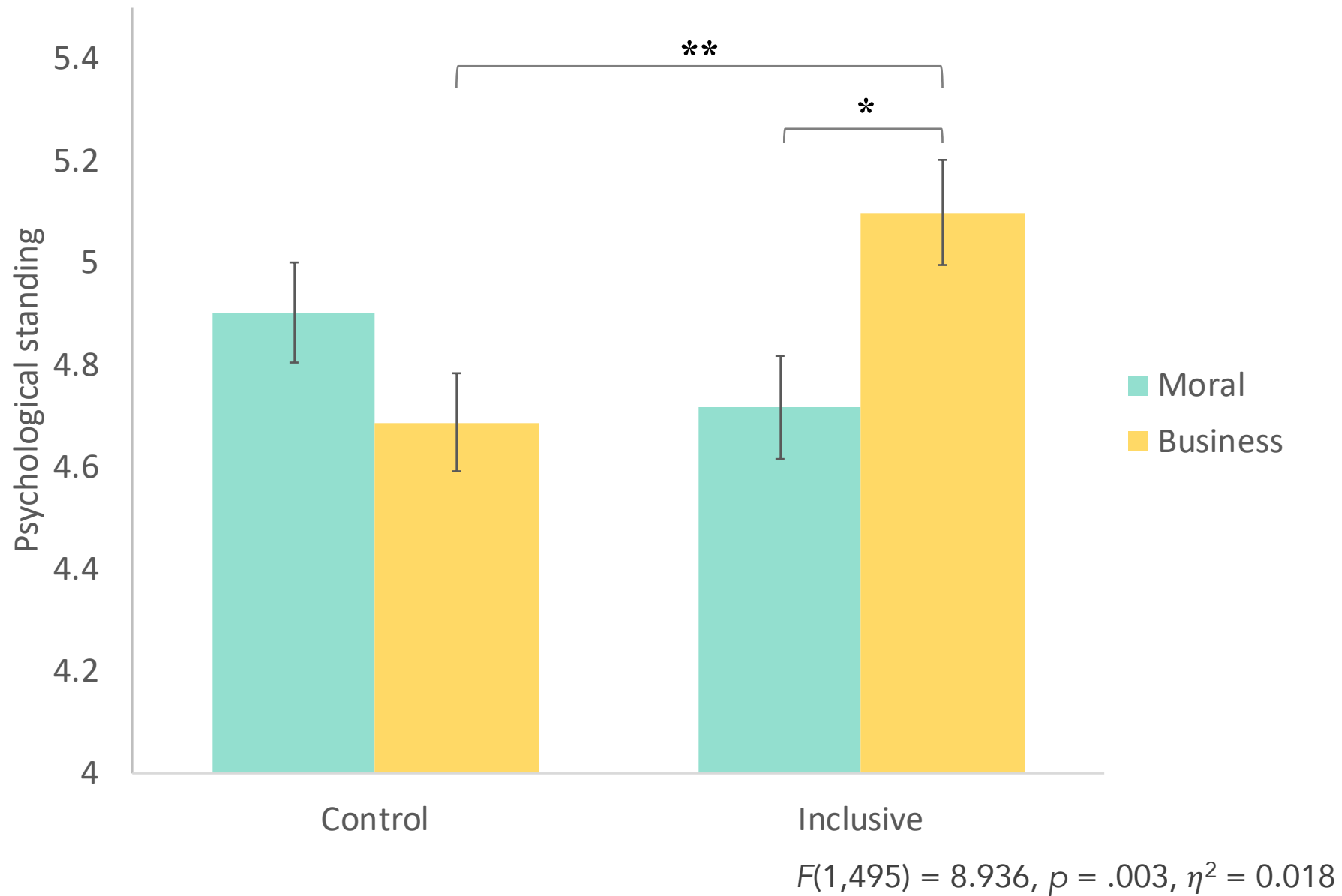
Summary

- Psychological standing predicts donation outcomes, controlling for other intergroup measures

- Business justification alone is functionally equivalent to neutral justification

- Moral justification is particularly effective for those who perceive more standing

- Inclusive language enhances Whites' perceived standing, without compromising POC's

Framing diversity is complex and context-dependent

Thank you!

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