

Keynote Finnish Social Psychology Conference

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Title: From the Lab to the Executive Suite: Using a theory of motivation to understand and intervene on employee motivation.

Abstract: This keynote addresses the critical intersection of social psychological research and the "hard" practices of organizational implementation. While Self-Determination Theory (SDT) provides a robust framework for analyzing human motivation, its impact on the world depends on the successful translation of evidence into practice to optimize motivation, performance, and well-being. I will present the assumptions and basic principles of SDT as a social psychological theory, and I will then present a few examples (on leadership and on rewards) of how experimental work does not always translate into successful interventions. I will also explain why I chose to study volunteers to optimize the motivation of paid workers, why I chose to study work design to understand the effects of rewards, and why I rarely use SDT in isolation when studying organizational practices. Finally, I will show how social psychology can push its impact to influence regulation and public policy.