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High Performance Teamwork in
Organizations:
Introducing Profiles of Team Conflict

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Outline

- A brief introduction to the team conflict variables
 - Separation vs. complexity perspectives
 - Profile-based approach
 - Findings and implications
 - Directions for future research
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Inherent conflict?

- Independence and shared responsibility often lead to conflict
 - Conflict, *of some form*, will undoubtedly be experienced within a team
 - Tuckman's (1965) model
 - Steiner's (1972) *Law* of team performance
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Types of conflict

- Relationship conflict -- RC
 - Interpersonal tensions
 - Personal issues that manifest as personality clashes
 - Correlation with performance, $\rho = -.14$
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Types of conflict

- Process conflict -- PC
 - Disagreements about how team's work should be accomplished
 - Conflicts around responsibility and which team member does what
 - Correlation with performance, $\rho = -.27$
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Types of conflict

- Task conflict -- TC
 - Disagreements about the nature of the work to be done
 - Conflicts from differences of opinion about goals
 - Correlation with performance, $\rho = -.06$
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Separation vs. complexity

- Separation
 - Role of different types of conflict examined independent of other conflict types
- Complexity
 - Acknowledge role of different forms of conflict simultaneously

Separation vs. complexity

- Not all conflict should be bad
 - Task conflict *should be beneficial* to team performance!
 - But only when relationship and process conflict are low

Complexity perspective

- *‘But doesn’t this just suggest a three-way interaction?’*
 - Yes
 - But much previous research failed to support these interactions

Complexity perspective

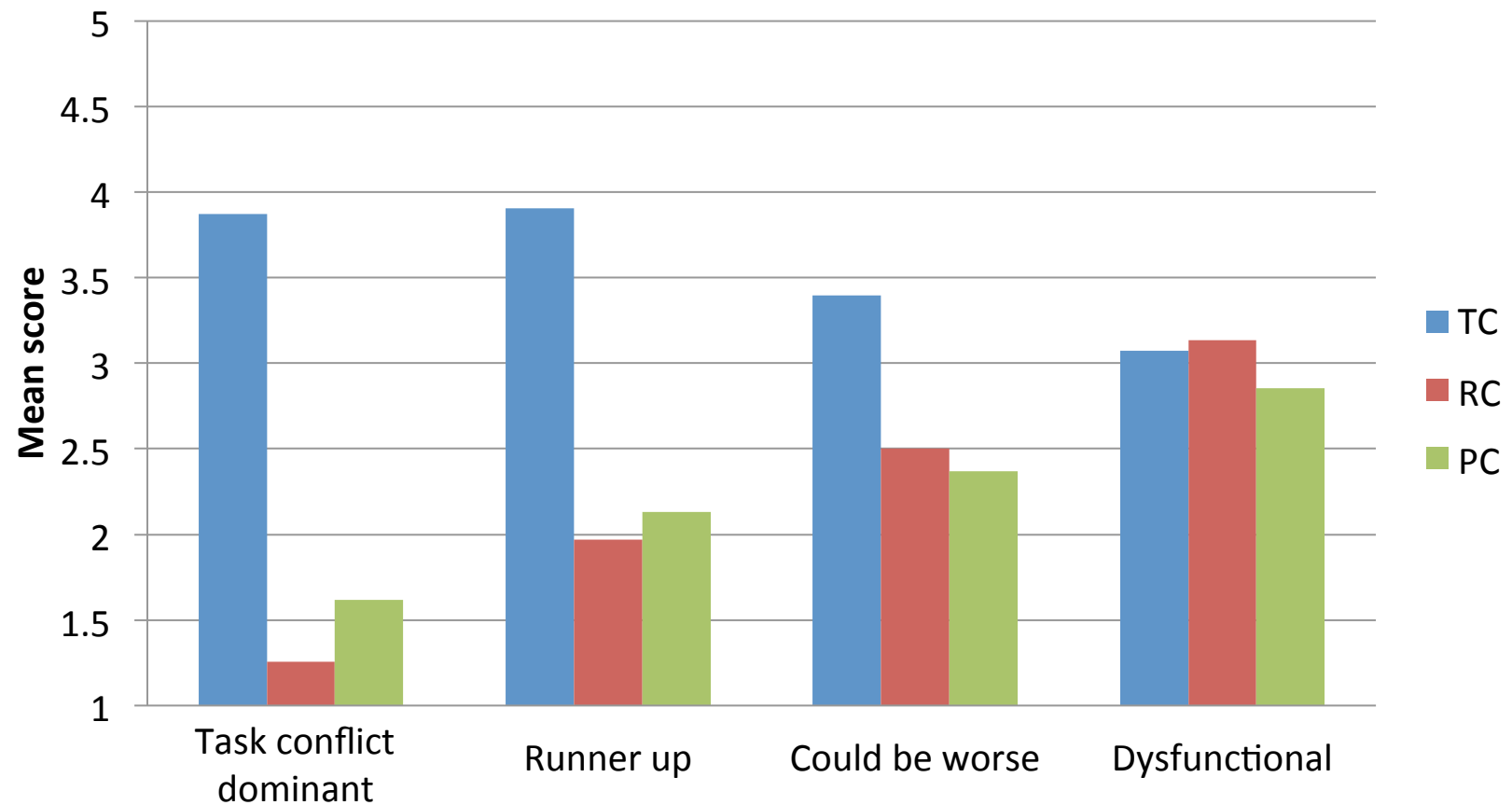
- Typical approaches to interactions
 - Low power
 - Linearity
- Person-centered approaches, like latent profile analysis (LPA), implicitly model interactions
 - Team-centered in our case

Complexity perspective

- LPA has allowed us to find a distinct subset of teams that have
 - High TC, low RC, and low PC
 - i.e., *the* ideal profile
 - Has lead to *discovery* of distinct types of teams

The conflict profiles

- Across **four independent** samples




The conflict profiles

O'Neill, T. A., McLarnon, M. J. W., Hoffart, G. C., Woodley, H. J., & Allen, N. J. (in press). The structure and function of team conflict state profiles. *Journal of Management*.

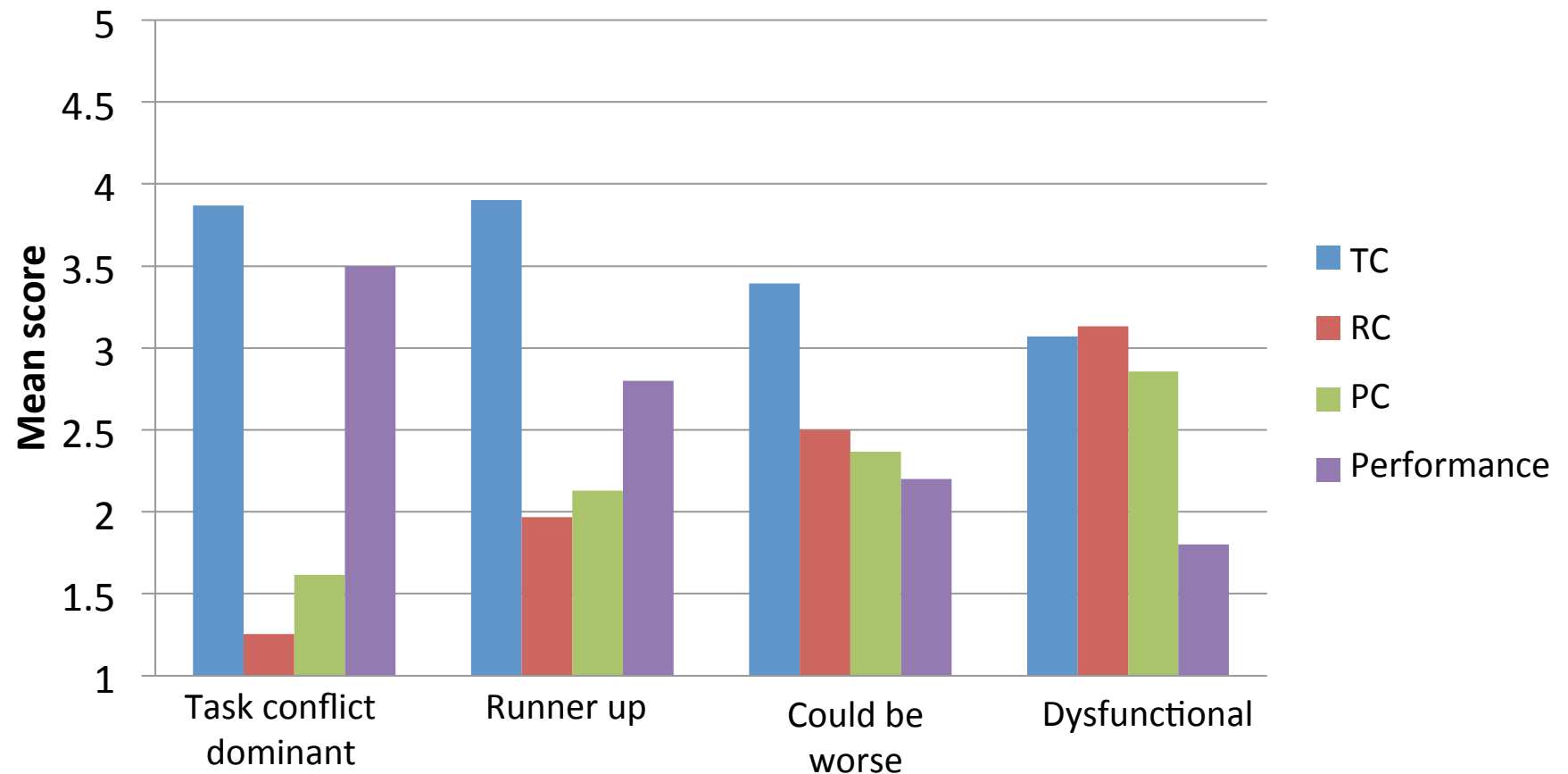
O'Neill, T. A., Hoffart, G. C., McLarnon, M. J. W., Woodley, H. J., Eggermont, M., Rosehart, W., & Brennan, R. (in press). Constructive controversy and reflexivity training promotes effective conflict profiles and outcomes in student learning teams. *Academy of Management Learning and Education*.

O'Neill, T. A., McLarnon, M. J. W., Hoffart, G., Onen, D., & Rosehart, W. (in press). The multilevel nomological net of team conflict profiles. *International Journal of Conflict Management*.



The conflict profiles

- Relation with team performance



The conflict profiles

- Evidence of construct validity
 - Psychological safety
 - TCD > Runner-up > Could be worse = Dysfunctional
 - Innovation
 - TCD > Runner-up = Could be worse = Dysfunctional

The conflict profiles

- Evidence of construct validity
 - Burnout
 - TCD > Runner-up > Could be worse = Dysfunctional
 - Perceptions of learning
 - TCD > Runner-up = Could be worse > Dysfunctional
 - Peer ratings of performance
 - TCD > Runner-up > Could be worse > Dysfunctional


Implications and Summary

- Robust set of four profiles
 - Task Conflict-Dominant (i.e., the *ideal*)
 - The Runner-up (i.e., RC/PC-Minor)
 - Could be worse (i.e., Mid-range Conflict)
 - Dysfunctional
- Evidence of construct validity
 - At the team- and individual-levels

Implications and Summary

- Main limitations
 - Cross-sectional
 - Student teams

A shameless sales pitch:

- If you have access to field teams, we'd be delighted to collaborate
 - We've got the
 - Expertise
 - Training program (**SUIT** intervention)
 - Assessment platform (itpmetrics.com)
 - Data analysis
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Thank you for your time!

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