

# Compulsory Collaboration: The Impact of Ignoring Preference on Productivity and Engagement

Allison E. Branch, Daniel E. Forster



## Introduction

Organizations rely on their employees' performance to find success in their field. Making sure that employees stay satisfied with the environment proves to be essential in increasing organizational performance.<sup>1</sup>

**Mandatory Fun:** the incorporation of activities into organizational work meant to increase employee motivation and productivity, often without the consideration of employee input.<sup>2</sup>

**Gamification:** incorporating game-like visuals or methods into workplace tasks to increase engagement and productivity.<sup>3</sup> Implementing gamification into tasks may adversely impact engagement and productivity due to the lack of consent and input from employees.<sup>4</sup>

### Hypotheses:

**H1:** Ignoring an individual's task preference will result in a decrease in collaborative task productivity, engagement, and feelings of control.

**H2:** Individuals with high openness to experience will demonstrate an increase in task productivity, engagement, and feelings of control despite task preference.

## Methods

**Participants:** N = 500, Prolific workers, (50.0% women; Age: 39.61 = mean, 13.29 = sd)

### Procedures:

**Collaborative Task:** Participants completed a spot-the-difference game with their partner. Each partner had access to a different image, and they had to use a chat room to figure out the number of differences between their images. Each pair had 5 minutes to complete the task.<sup>5</sup>

### Survey Measures:

**Engagement:** Participants completed a 3-item survey measuring engagement with the task using a Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).<sup>4</sup>

**Control:** Participants completed a 5-item survey measuring feelings of control using a Likert scale.<sup>4</sup>

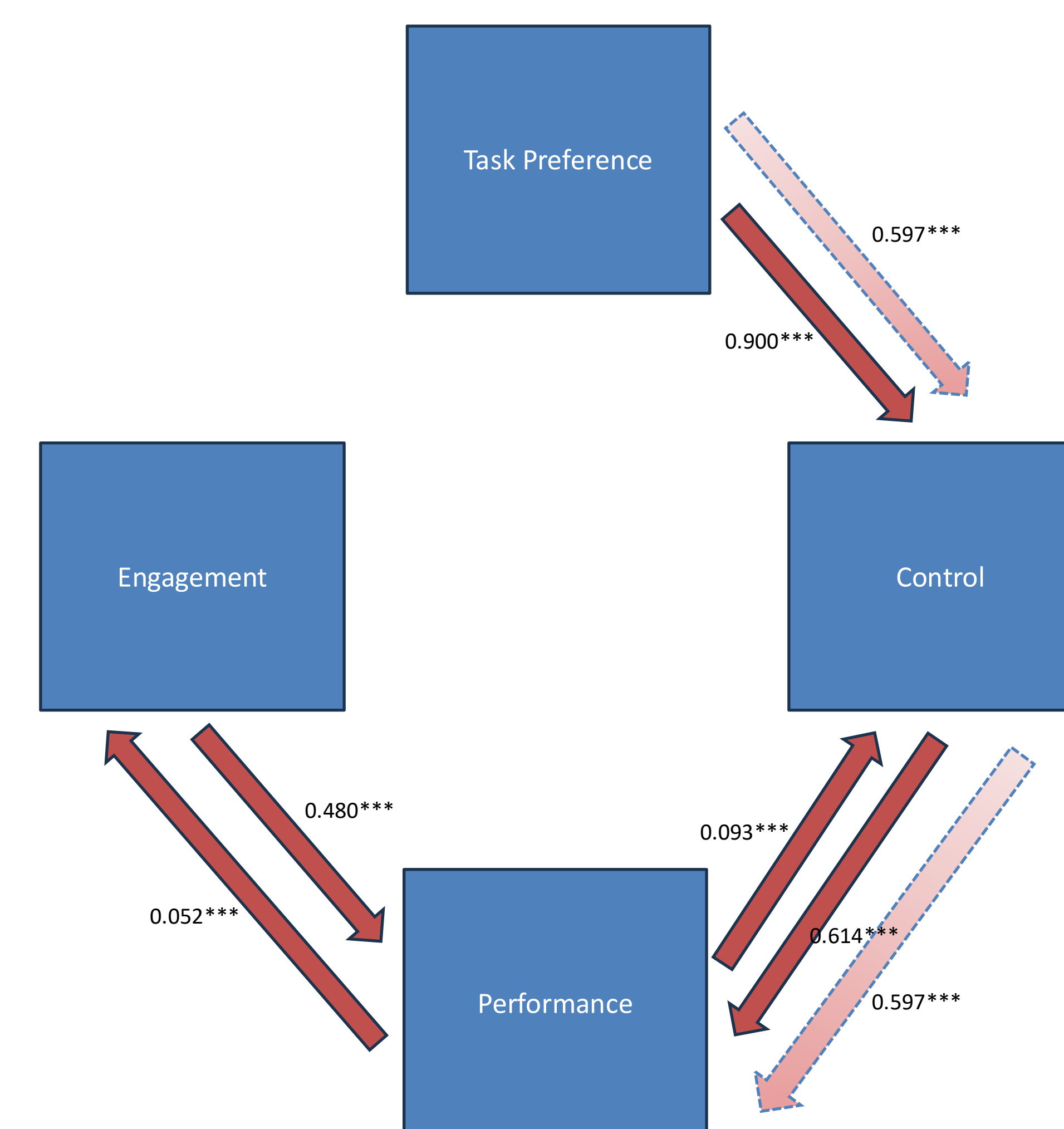
**Personality:** Participants completed the HEXACO-18 Personality Assessment which used a Likert scale to measure 6 different personality dimensions.<sup>6</sup>

### Data Analysis

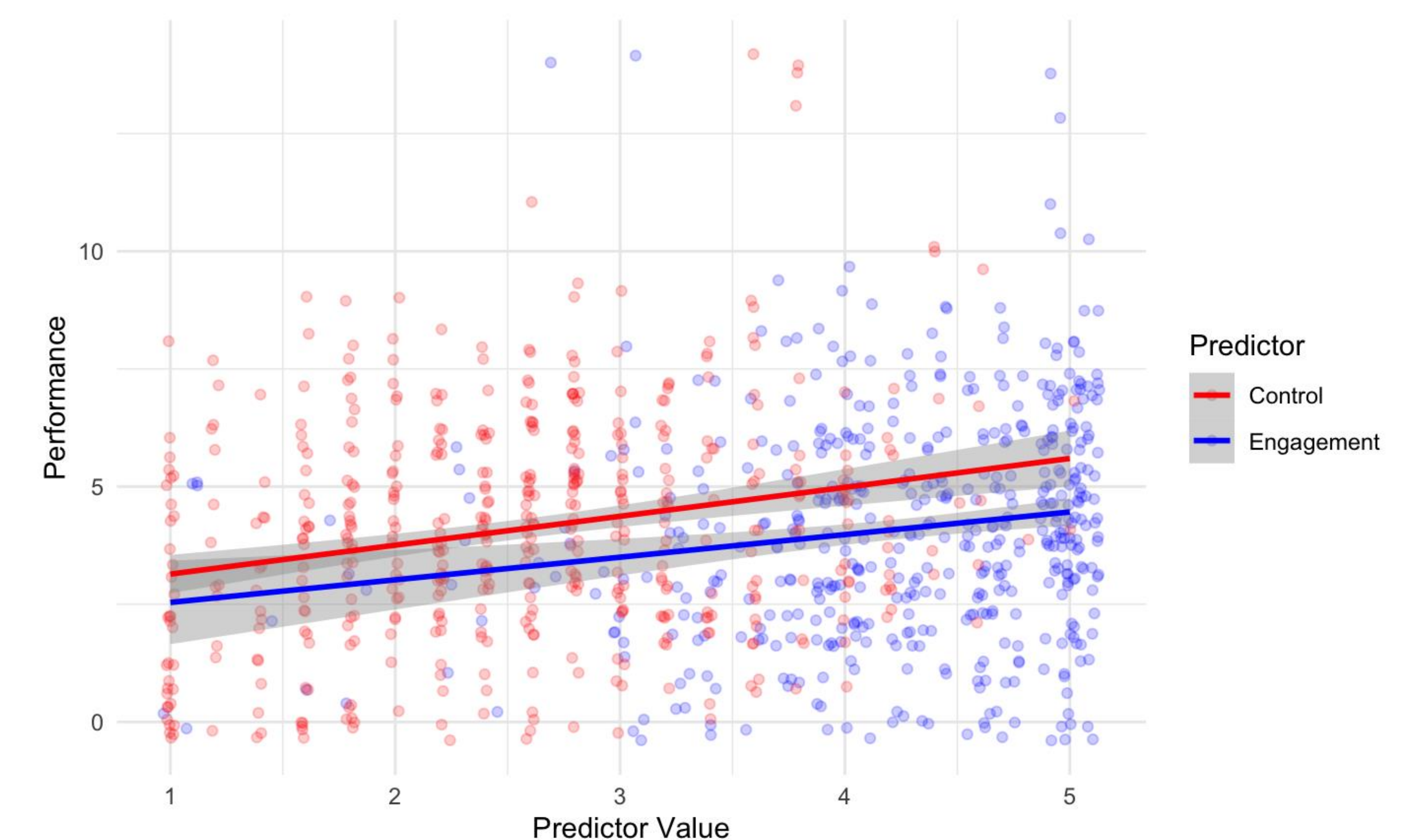
We conducted a reliability test for each measure in addition to a regression and path analysis using R Studio.

## Results

### Path Analysis:



### Relationship between Performance, Engagement, and Control:



**Although task preference did not directly impact task performance, participants who reported higher levels of engagement and feelings of control performed better on the task.**

## Discussion

Our results not only reveal that an individual's engagement levels and feelings of control influence their performance within a task, but that knowing how well you performed impacts your perception of engagement with the task and control over your activities. We believe that the latter may be due to the order of our procedures and the fact that participants found out if they got the answer correct before taking the surveys.

Although we did find evidence in support that task preference directly impact performance within a collaborative task, we hypothesize that there may be an indirect effect of task preference on performance through our control variable. In the future, we will continue to explore the relationship between these variables through 1) different ways to indicate preference and 2) latent variables impacting our analyses.

### References

<sup>1</sup>Mansor, F., et al. (2023). Employee engagement and organizational performance. *Int. J. Acct. & Fin.* 10.55573/IJAFB.085006; <sup>2</sup>Kim, T. W., & Werbach, K. (2016). More than just a game: Ethical issues in Gamification. *Ethics and Information Technology*, 18(2), 157–173. 10.1007/s10676-016-9401-5; <sup>3</sup>Cardador, M. (2017). A theory of work gamification: Something old, something new, something borrowed, something cool? *Hum. Res. Manage. Rev.*, 27(2), 353–365. 10.1016/j.hrmr.2016.09.014; <sup>4</sup>Mollick, E. R., & Rothbard, N. (2013). Mandatory fun: Gamification and the impact of games at work. *SSRN Elect. J.* 10.2139/ssrn.2277103; <sup>5</sup>Scribd. (2013). Information Gap Activities Handout. Scribd. www.scribd.com/doc/149093711/Information-G; <sup>6</sup>Olaru, G., & Jankowsky, K. (2021). The HEX-ACO-18: Developing an age-invariant HEXACO short scale using ant colony optimization. *J. Pers. Assess.*, 104(4), 435–446. 10.1080/00223891.2021.1934480