

Hero vs. Traitor:

The Role of Construal Level and Perceived Group Changeability in Predicting Evaluations of a Dissenter

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RESEARCH QUESTION

**How do people evaluate a dissenter?
What determines positive vs. negative
evaluations of a dissenter?**

BACKGROUND

- Group improvement not only requires a dissenter to point out the problematic group norm but also needs group members to listen to the dissenter.
- **Dual motive conflict** (e.g., Packer, Fujita, & Chasteen, 2014).
Facing a dissenter against potentially harmful norm, identified group members may be motivated by...

Short-term group stability goal	OR	Long-term group improvement goal
→ Ignore the dissenter		→ listen to the dissenter

- **Perceived group changeability**: accentuates the tension between group stability and group improvement goals (see Johnson & Fujita, 2012)
 - The dissenter disrupts group stability, but high perceived changeability makes group improvement seem attainable.

- **Construal level**: affects goal selection (e.g., Fujita et al., 2006)

<u>Low-level Construal</u> Greater weight to concrete and immediate considerations	<u>High-level Construal</u> Greater weight to broader and longer-term concerns
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STUDY 1: METHOD

- **Group changeability measure** (modified from Chiu, Dweck, Tong, & Fu, 1997)
 - e.g., “You can’t really do much to change groups you are in. (R)” “You can always substantially change how your group is.”
- **Construal manipulation**: Why-how task (Freitas et al., 2004)

<u>Low-level Condition</u> How do you improve and maintain health?	<u>High-level Condition</u> Why do you improve and maintain health?
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- Article introducing group norm & the dissenter
 - Norm: A majority (84%) of students at the Ohio State University do not believe that plagiarism is a “big problem”
 - Dissenter: Alex Young, a sophomore at OSU, believes plagiarism is “unacceptable academic misconduct.”
- DV: Evaluation of the dissenter (10 positive/negative traits)

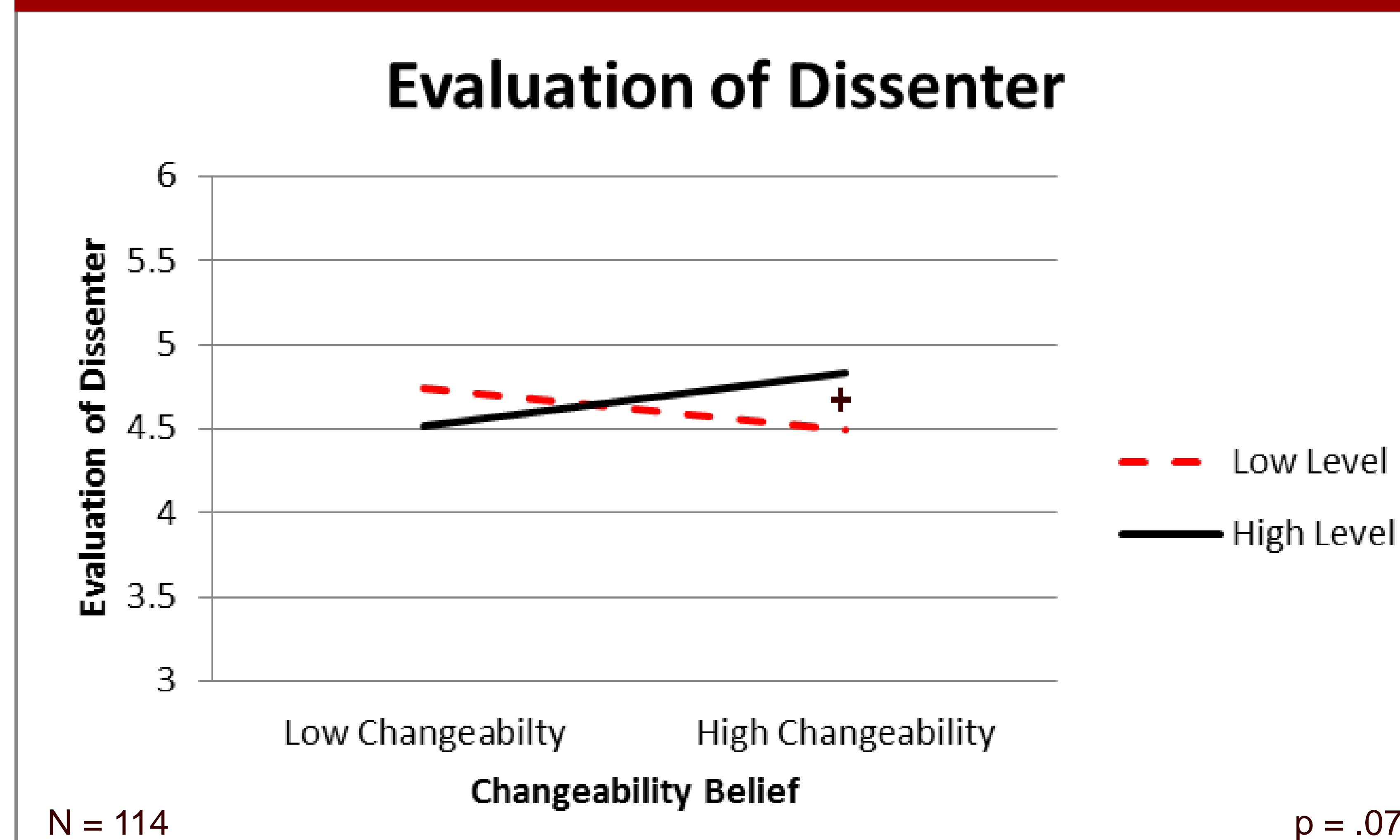
STUDY 2: METHOD

- **Construal manipulation**: Category-exemplar task (Fujita et al., 2006)

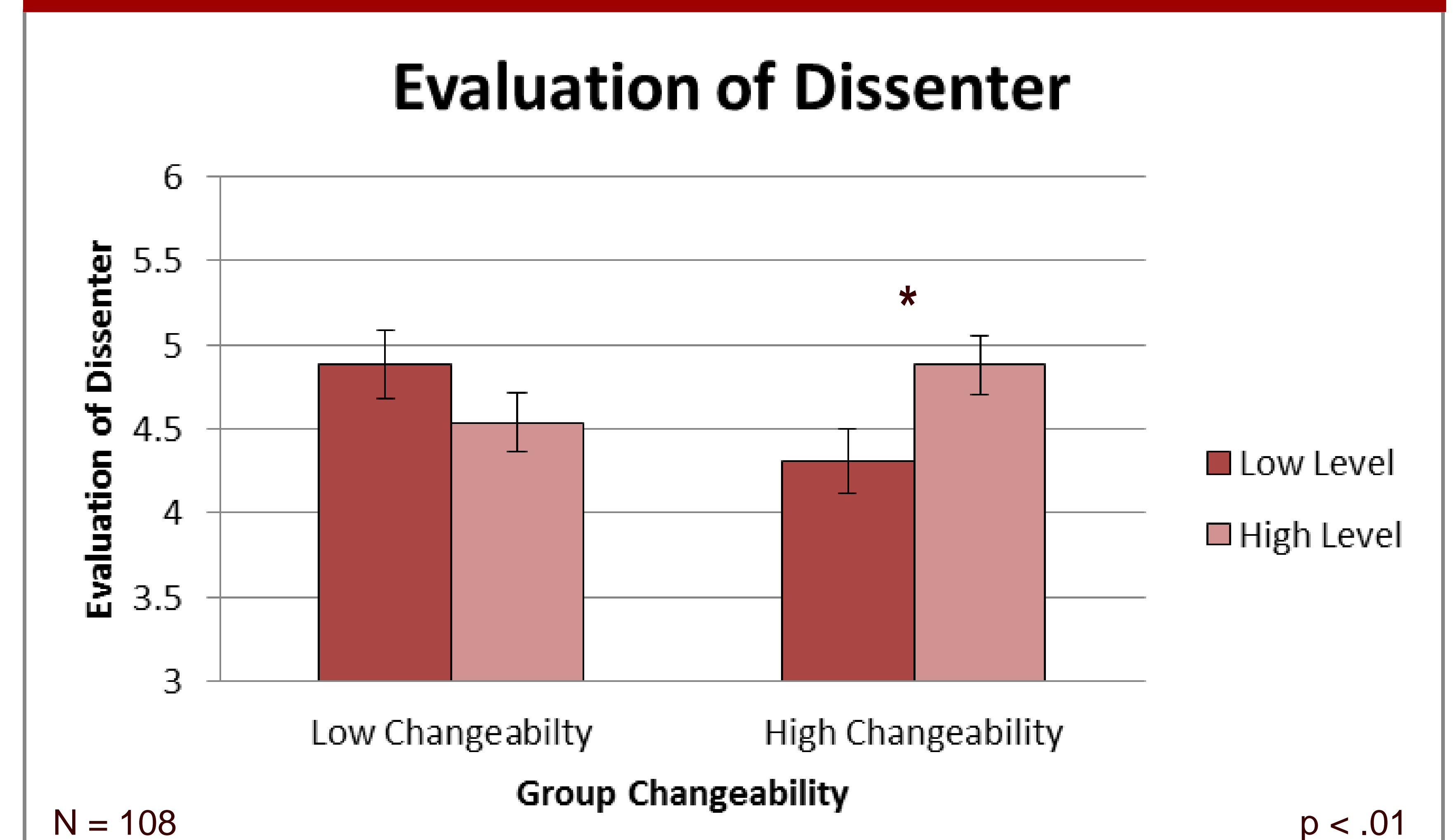
<u>Low-level Condition</u> Provide an example	<u>High-level Condition</u> Provide a category
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- Article introducing current group norm & the dissenter
 - Norm: A majority (84%) of students at the Ohio State University do not believe that plagiarism is a “big problem”
 - Dissenter: Alex Young, a sophomore at OSU, believes plagiarism is “unacceptable academic misconduct.”
- **Group changeability manipulation** added at the end of the article

<u>Low Changeability Condition</u> “change is really tough, but I still believe change is possible.”	<u>High Changeability Condition</u> “change is possible.”
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- DV: Evaluation of the dissenter (12 positive/negative traits)

STUDY 1: RESULTS



STUDY 2: RESULTS



HYPOTHESES

- **Individuals under high-level construal would have more positive/less negative dissenter evaluations than individuals under low-level ...when there is high perceived group changeability**

CONCLUSIONS

- **When high in perceived changeability, individuals under high-level construal (vs. low-level) evaluate a dissenter more positively.**
- Dual motive conflict occurs in evaluating a dissenter.
 - Perceived changeability accentuates dual motive conflict between group stability and group improvement goals.
 - Construal level modulates group members’ dissenter evaluations upon having the goal conflict.
 - High-level orients toward longer-term, group improvement goals.
 - Low-level orients toward short-term, group stability goals.