

Leaning in to Shared Emotions: Does Prioritizing Positivity Boost Positivity Resonance with Weak Social Ties?

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INTRODUCTION

- **Prioritizing positivity:** an individualized difference of structuring one's day to experience spontaneous positive emotions¹
- **Positivity resonance:** a positive social connection of co-experienced positive emotions that is characterized by shared positive affect, caring nonverbal synchrony, and biological synchrony²
- Prioritizing positivity and positivity resonance are both positively associated with flourishing mental health^{1,2}
- Prioritizing positivity may change over time partly because greater levels of positive emotions at an initial exposure to an activity predict repeated engagement in that activity³
- Socially connecting with weak ties is important for well-being^{4,5} and positivity resonance with weak ties produces positive outcomes⁶
- Behavioral Indicators of Positivity Resonance (BIPR), a behavioral coding system for positivity resonance, has only been used in the context of strong ties⁷

Aim: To investigate whether BIPR with strangers (positivity resonance with strangers) explains the link between increased prioritizing positivity and flourishing mental health.

METHOD

Participants

- $N = 349$, 20-64 years old ($M = 34.1$, $SD = 11.27$)



Measures

- **Abbreviated Prioritizing Positivity Scale¹ (PriPos):** measures the degree to which one arranges their day-to-day life to experience positive emotions ($\alpha = .84$)
- **Abbreviated Ten-Item Personality Inventory⁸ (TIPI):** Extraversion scale ($\alpha = .77$) and one Openness to Experiences item to assess these personality traits
- **Mental Health Continuum-Short Form⁹:** measures flourishing mental health ($\alpha = .91$)
- **Positivity Resonance Scale²:** 35 days of nightly reports of positivity resonance event reconstruction with weak ties (i.e., strangers and acquaintances; $\alpha = .99$)
- **Behavioral Indicators of Positivity Resonance⁷ (BIPR):** behavioral coding system of positivity resonance on a 3-point scale (intraclass coefficient = .89)
- **Observer's Rating of Positivity Resonance²:** examiner's perceived positivity resonance rating of interaction with participant ($\alpha = .98$)

RESULTS

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of Study Variables

Variable	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. PriPos T1	325	7.04	1.40	-							
2. PriPos T2	313	7.00	1.34	.67***	-						
3. Flourishing	319	4.35	.84	.42***	.47***	-					
4. BIPR with strangers	349	.58	.33	.04	-.01	.01	-				
5. Self-Reported PosRes with Weak Ties	349	67.23	17.32	.22***	.29***	.49***	-.01	-			
6. Observer's Rating of PosRes	349	80.78	17.04	.08	-0.01	.08	.20***	.09	-		
7. Extraversion	331	3.91	1.56	.25***	.20***	.30***	-.06	.14*	.19***	-	
8. Openness to Experiences	331	5.28	1.02	.15**	.14*	.14*	-.05	.01	-.04	.25***	-

Note. PriPos = Prioritizing Positivity, PosRes = Positivity Resonance.

*** $p < .001$

** $p < .01$

* $p < .05$

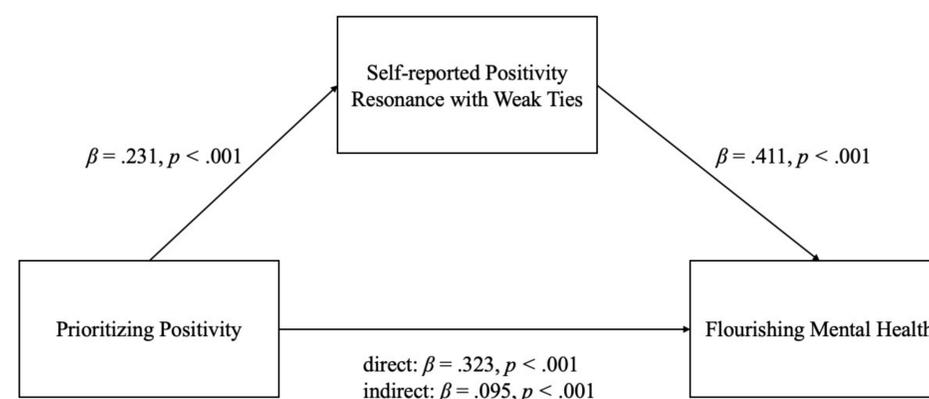
- BIPR is only correlated with observer's rating of positivity resonance
- No change in prioritizing positivity
 - T1: $M = 7.04$, $SD = 1.40$; T2: $M = 7.00$, $SD = 1.34$
 - Time of data collection (T1 or T2) regressed on the prioritizing positivity score: ($\beta = -.017$, $p = .670$; $F(4, 633) = 1.373$, $p = .242$, $R^2 = .009$)

Replaced:

Change in prioritizing positivity → positivity resonance at T1
BIPR with strangers → self-reported positivity resonance with weak ties

Exploratory Analysis

- Positivity resonance with weak ties partially mediated (22.7 %) the association between prioritizing positivity and flourishing mental health



DISCUSSION

- Prioritizing positivity may be a stable trait or have a ceiling effect
- BIPR with strangers may need to be modified to be more applicable to stranger interactions
- Shared positive emotions and positive social connections with weak ties are important for well-being
- Positivity resonance with weak ties partly explains the link between prioritizing positivity and flourishing mental health
- Positivity resonance with weak ties is one way to lean in to an opportunity to boost positive emotions
- Positivity resonance with weak ties is only one pathway that contributes to increasing flourishing mental health when prioritizing positivity

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