

A Precondition for Feeling Positively In-Sync with Less Familiar People: Psychosocial Safety

Mia L. Foglesong*, Landry A. Kuehn*, Catherine J. Berman, & Barbara L. Fredrickson

Introduction

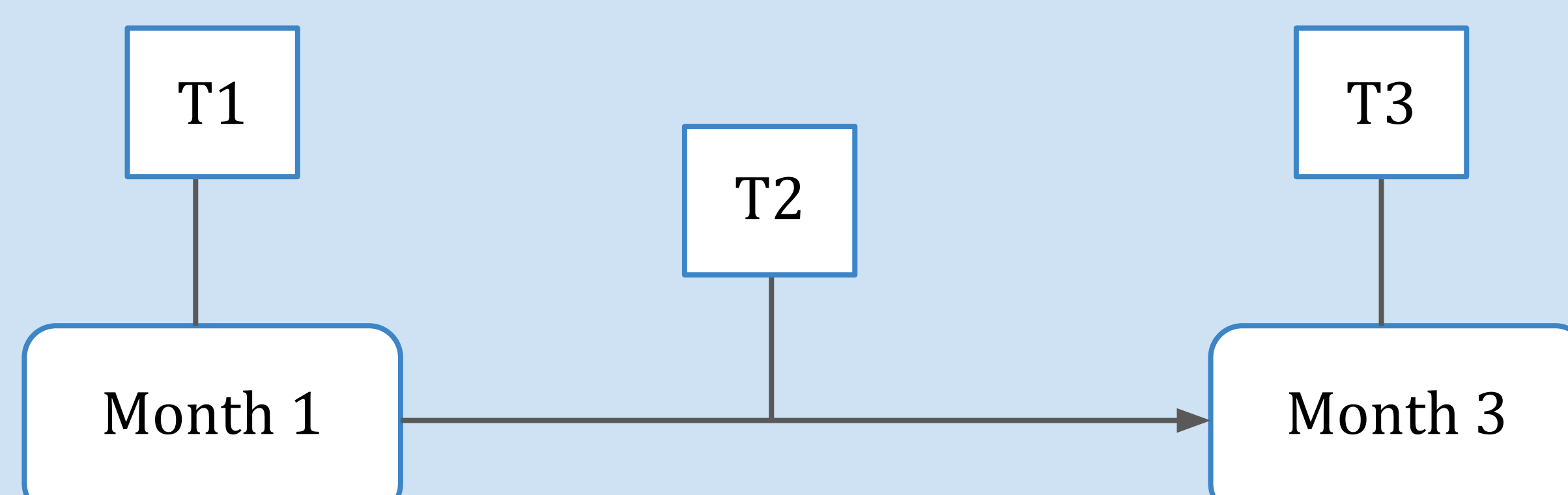
- Positivity resonance is associated with benefits for people
 - Individual: better mental health, less symptoms of depression and perceived loneliness, less illness related symptoms (Major et al., 2018). Decreased risk of mortality (Wells et al., 2022).
 - Community: more prosocial tendencies (Zhou et al., 2022).
- Psychological safety is theorized to be a precondition for experiencing positivity resonance (Fredrickson et al., 2016).

Hypotheses:

1. Is psychological safety associated with positivity resonance with weak-tied or less familiar people like acquaintances and strangers?
2. Does Anticipated discrimination moderate the effect of psychological safety on positivity resonance?

Methods

- Longitudinal dataset collected in North Carolina and representative of the state (N = 1,550).
- Once per month across 3 months, participants reflected on an interaction with a weak social-tie.
- Participants rated whether they experienced safety threats (coded as “yes” or “no”) and whether they anticipated discrimination from strangers (1-7 scale).



Results

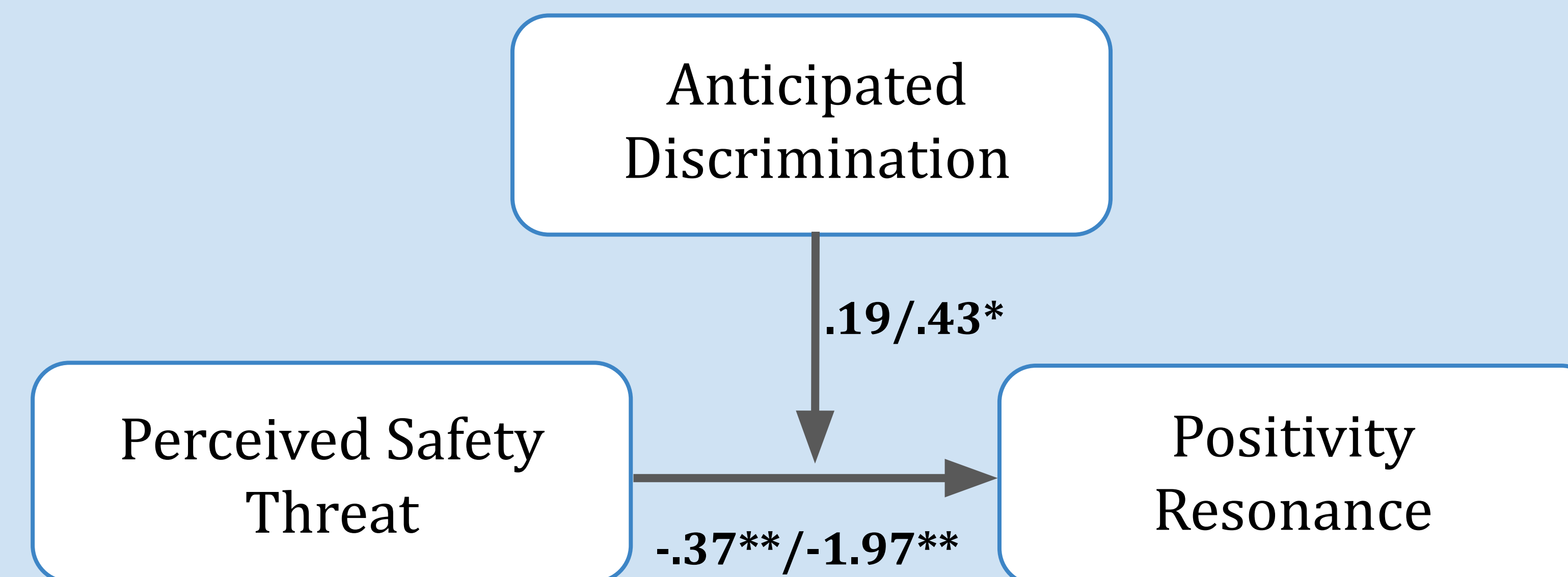


Figure 1. Moderation of anticipated discrimination. Comparing within/between group effects. * $p < .01$, ** $p < .001$.

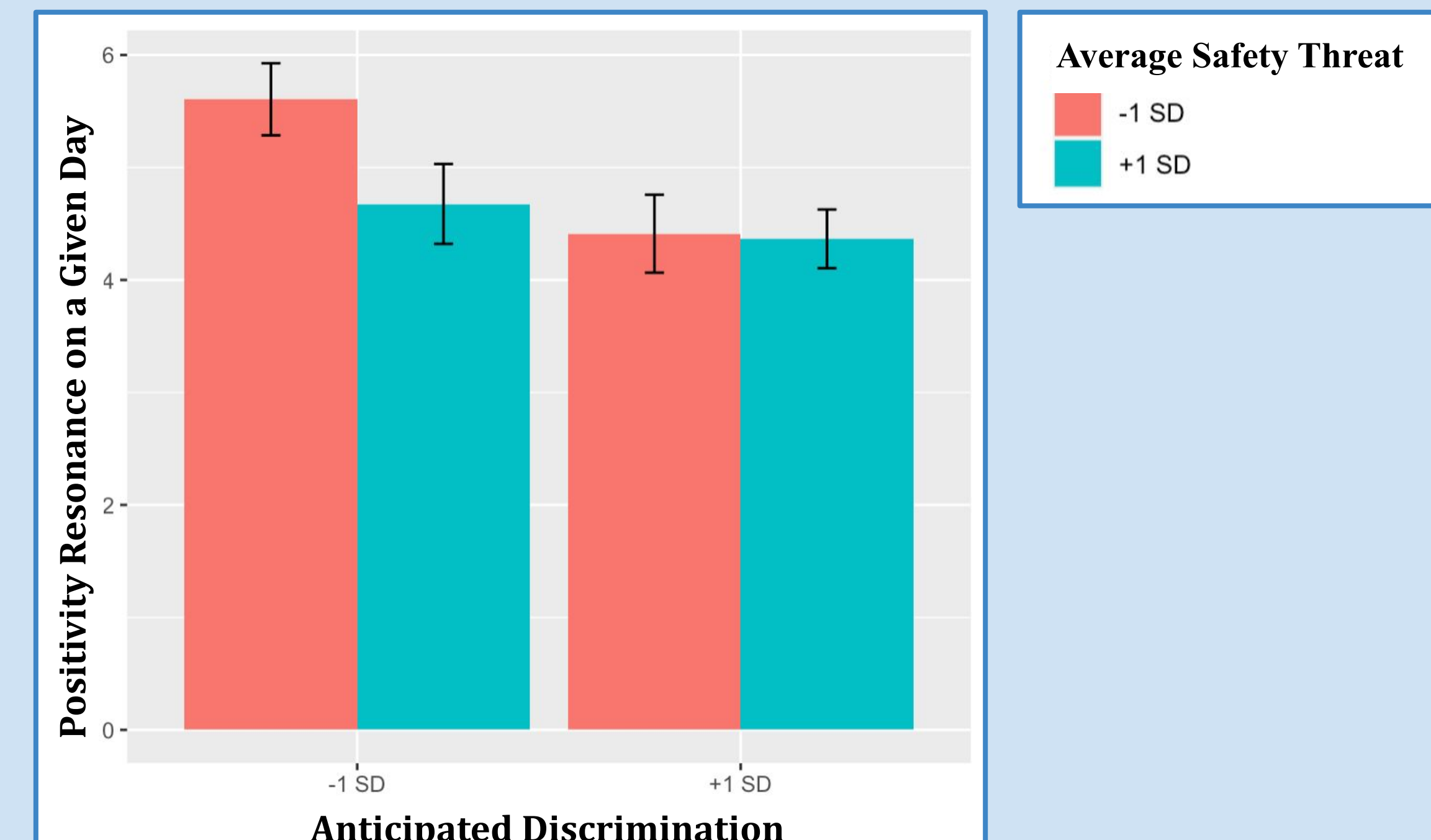


Figure 2. Moderation model of between-person effect: Anticipated discrimination of ‘low’ and ‘high’ stigma versus average positivity resonance.

- People who are more likely to experience positivity resonance on a given day when on average they perceive less safety threats and less anticipated discrimination (within-person effect) on that same day.
- Anticipated Discrimination moderates trait effects between perceived safety threat and positivity resonance but not state effects.
- Trait safety was only a significant predictor of positivity resonance when there is low anticipated discrimination.
- State safety was significant predictor of positivity resonance regardless of anticipated discrimination levels.

Discussion

- Within-person effects of safety regardless of anticipated discrimination support the theory of psychosocial safety as a precondition for positivity resonance.
- When individuals felt higher safety threats than their average, they experienced significantly lower levels of positivity resonance when interacting socially
- Between-person (trait) psychosocial safety is only a significant factor in positivity resonance at low anticipated discrimination; at high anticipated discrimination, safety threat becomes a less significant factor.

Future Implications

- Investigate the average psychosocial safety one tends to feel beyond the day-to-day basis and its relationship to experienced positivity resonance (long & short-term).
- Explore the influence of paranoia traits and other confounding mental states on perceived psychosocial safety in relation to positivity resonance.
- Do our environments prime us on a trait level to anticipate more or less discrimination? Look further into the influence of environmental cues and familiarity with surroundings.

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References

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