

# Do Good, Feel Good: Exploring Associations Between Positivity Resonance with Weak Social Ties and Future Civic Engagement Behavior

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## Hypotheses

**Hypothesis 1:** The proportion of time that participants report volunteering in the previous months will be associated with greater positivity resonance experienced with weak social ties.

**Hypothesis 2:** The relationship between volunteering and positivity resonance will be moderated by subjective socioeconomic status.

## Positivity Resonance

Specific markers in an interaction (**shared positivity**, **mutual care and concern** and **biological and behavioral synchrony**) are theorized to lead to higher-quality interpersonal connection (Fredrickson, 2016). Earlier studies have linked positivity resonance with self-transcendent prosocial tendencies and fewer self-centered tendencies (West et al., 2021; Zhou, 2022).

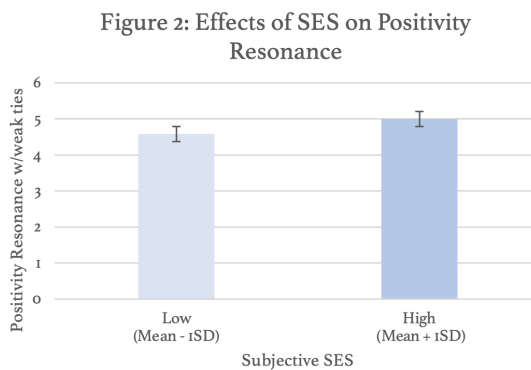
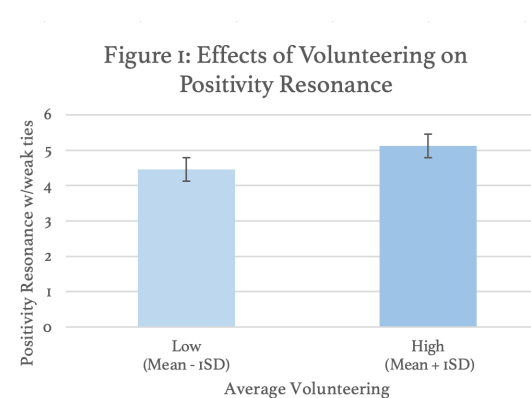
## Methods

$N = 1550$  North Carolinians (mean age of 50.2;  $SD = 17.5$ ), 57.4% women, 41.8% men & 1.09% nonbinary; 70.6% reported some college or higher; 17.9% Black/African American, 72.7% White & 29.6% Hispanic.

Using multilevel modeling, we tested whether volunteering (IV) predicts higher-quality social interactions with weak social ties (DV) and if the relationship is moderated by socioeconomic status. We included 3 predictors:

- Time (month 1, 2, 3)
- Within-person effect of volunteering (someone's monthly change from their average level of volunteering).
- Between-person effect of volunteering (someone's overall level of volunteering across the 3 months).

**Scales:** Positivity Resonance Scale (Major et al., 2018); Civic Engagement Behavior Scale, MacArthur Ladder (Operio et al., 2004).



## Results

1. People who reported greater average levels of volunteering tended to have higher positivity resonance with weak social ties ( $b = .26$ , 95% CI [.14, .39],  $p < .001$ ).

2. No significant interaction effect between subjective SES (ladder) and either of the volunteering effects (within or between person effect) was found.

\* However, in general, people with higher subjective SES had higher positivity resonance with weak ties,  $b = .11$ , 95% CI [.02, .20],  $p = .016$

## Discussion

**Broad takeaway:** Those who volunteer experience more positivity resonance with people they don't know too well.

Also, prosocial behaviors like volunteering promote positivity resonance. This is a steppingstone between understanding what unites people and how positive emotions & social connections can motivate individuals to engage in collective action to promote the greater good.

### Limitations & Future Directions

- Self-report measures & using a 24-hour period of reporting experiencing positive resonance is limited.
- Future research should focus on causality and conduct a randomized controlled trial to test whether interventions that promote positivity resonance (e.g., gratitude journaling, loving-kindness meditation) can lead to increased civic engagement over time.



\* Denotes first authorship