

Introduction

Functional flexibility is a key factor of the Behavioral Immune System as an adaptive threat management system^[1]. In times of high pathogen stress, behaviors that protect the individual but conflict with human desires (e.g., social distancing) should be encouraged^[2]. If behavioral changes are a consequence of functional flexibility, short-term changes in the self-perception of personality traits could mediate

this conflict. Previous studies^[3-5] have found inconsistent changes in personality measures, while avoidance behaviors consistently increased. The level and manipulation of pathogen stress, however, was different for all previous studies.

Aim: Compare changes in self-perception of personality traits and behavior at different levels of pathogen stress.

Methods



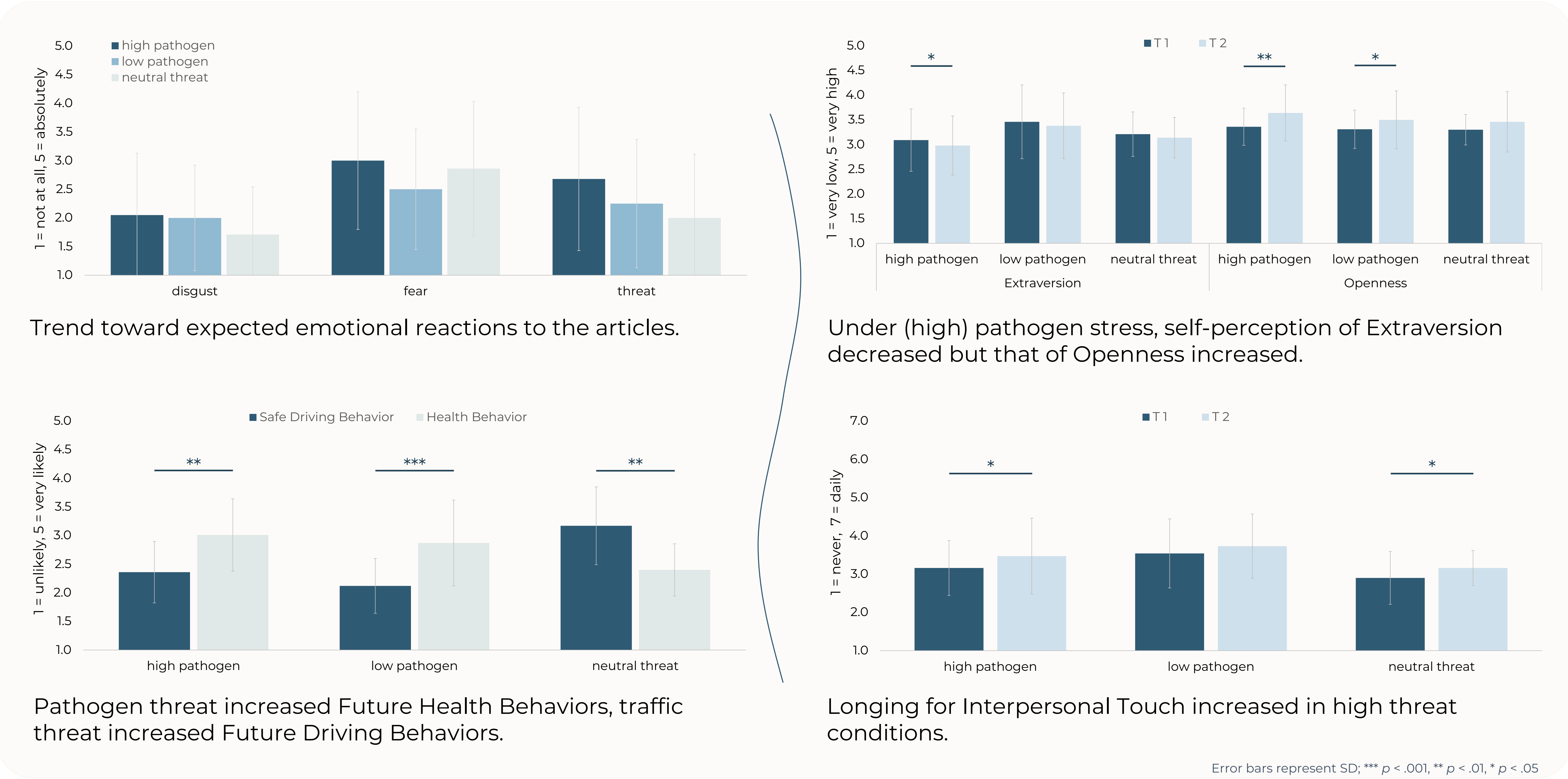
Preliminary Results

$N = 53$

$n_{high} = 19, n_{low} = 20, n_{neutral} = 14$

19 – 71 years old ($M = 33.98, SD = 12.30$)

$\text{♀} = 38, \text{♂} = 15$



Articles influenced emotional reactions as well as directly related behaviors in line with planned manipulations.

Discussion

Contrary to expectations, desire for social touch increased. Fear reactions to threat could increase this desire for emotional regulation.

The increase in Openness under pathogen stress could be an indicator of a general openness to more information regarding the threat or an openness toward people for support (i.e., ingroup cooperation^[see 6]).

Conclusion & Future Prospects

The articles seem to elicit feelings of threat and changes in self-perception of personality and behavior.

With a larger sample, mediations can investigate whether changes in self-perceptions of personality traits explain behavioral changes.

References

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