

The Influence of Regulatory Focus on Support Receipt

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Introduction

Support Perception vis a vis Motivational Needs

- Prior work suggests the importance of ensuring support is attuned to the support recipients' motivational needs ^[1]
- Later research has shown that a recipient's experience of support receipt becomes attuned in ways that meet their chronic motivational needs ^[2]

Regulatory Focus Theory (RFT)

- RFT proposes two motivational orientations that regulate goal pursuit
 - Promotion-focus:** individuals' motivational orientation revolves around attaining growth and achieving advancement in an eager and enthusiastic manner (i.e., "gains")
 - Prevention-focus:** individuals' motivational orientation revolves around maintaining safety and security in a cautious and vigilant manner (i.e., "non-losses")

Research Question

What is the relationship between an individual's level of **promotion-focus** and their experiences of social support receipt during a stressful situation?

Hypothesis

- Individuals higher (vs. lower) on **promotion-focus** will report beneficial support outcomes.
 - Promotion-focused** individuals tend to focus on opportunities for gains and thus, they might construe support received as an opportunity to perform well (i.e., achieve a "gain") ^[2]

Method

Participants

- 101 friend dyads ($N = 202$ individuals)

Procedure

- Dyadic Laboratory Study with Stressful Speech Task

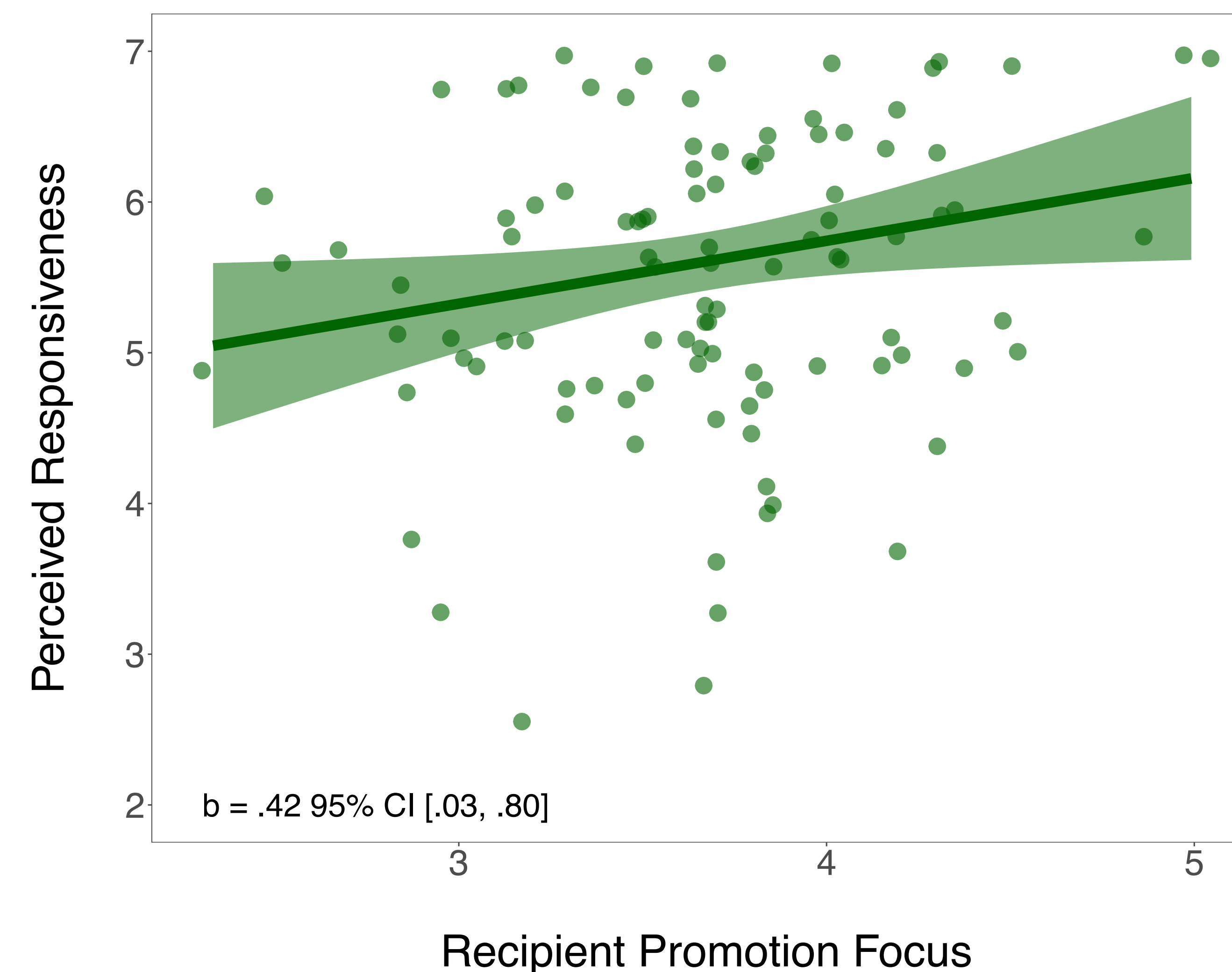
Measure Regulatory Focus

- Regulatory Focus Questionnaire used to measure participants' levels of promotion (6 items) and prevention (5 items) focus ^[3]
 - Promotion:** "How often have you accomplished things that you got 'psyched' to work even harder?" ("1 – Never", "5 – Very Often")
 - Prevention:** "How often did you obey rules and regulations that were established by your parents?" ("1 – Never", "5 – Very Often")

Support Discussion and Speech Task

- One friend ("Target") randomly assigned to give a stressful speech
- Support Discussion (5 min):
 - Target instructed to share their thoughts and feelings about the speech
 - Provider instructed to provide help in any way that seemed appropriate.
 - Targets rate the responsiveness and effectiveness of the support
- Speech Task (3 min):
 - 3-minute speech on a personally-relevant topic to be "evaluated" by a (confederate) expert
 - Speech task shown to be a reliable and effective method of inducing moderate stress in a laboratory setting ^[4]

Effect of Promotion Focus on Perceived Responsiveness



Analysis Strategy

Multiple linear regression

- Predictor: Support recipient's **promotion** focus
- Control variable: Support recipient's **prevention** focus
- Dependent Variables:
 - Perceived Responsiveness, as rated by recipients ("1– Not at all", "7 - Extremely")
 - i.e., "During the conversation, my partner made me feel cared for."
 - Support Effectiveness, as rated by recipients ("1– Not at all", "7 - Extremely")
 - For the process
 - i.e., "The help my partner tried to give me left me with a better understanding..."
 - For the outcome measures
 - i.e., "The help my partner tried to give me changed the situation for the better."

Results

- Overall, the pattern of results show **support** for our original hypothesis:
 - Support recipients (targets) higher (vs. lower) on **promotion-focus** tended to perceive support more positively.
- Promotion** was **positively** and **significantly** related to higher perceptions of responsiveness, and **marginally**, to perceptions of support effectiveness
- Promotion** was **not** significantly related to perceptions of support process, although effect pointed in the **expected** direction

Discussion

Implications

- Advances** understanding of the critical role that motivational orientations take in shaping support perception and receipt among friend dyads
- Results **portray** need for further investigation into the relationship between **promotion-focus** and the perception of support within friend dyads

Future Directions

- Expand** findings to more diverse population (i.e., romantic dyads, older couples)
- Investigate** the effects of **prevention-focus** on support receipt
- Reproduce** results upon a larger sample size to increase effect accuracy

References

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