

LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE: DO PEOPLE ADJUST AFFECTIVE FORECASTS FOLLOWING FEEDBACK?

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Introduction

- Affective forecasting refers to the ability to predict how one will feel in response to future events¹
- Prior research indicates that people consistently overestimate how intense and long-lasting those feelings will be (impact bias)²
- However, little is known about how people adjust predictions after emotional experience³
- This study examined how individuals update affective forecasts after receiving false feedback that induced either positive or negative emotional states.

Methods

Participants

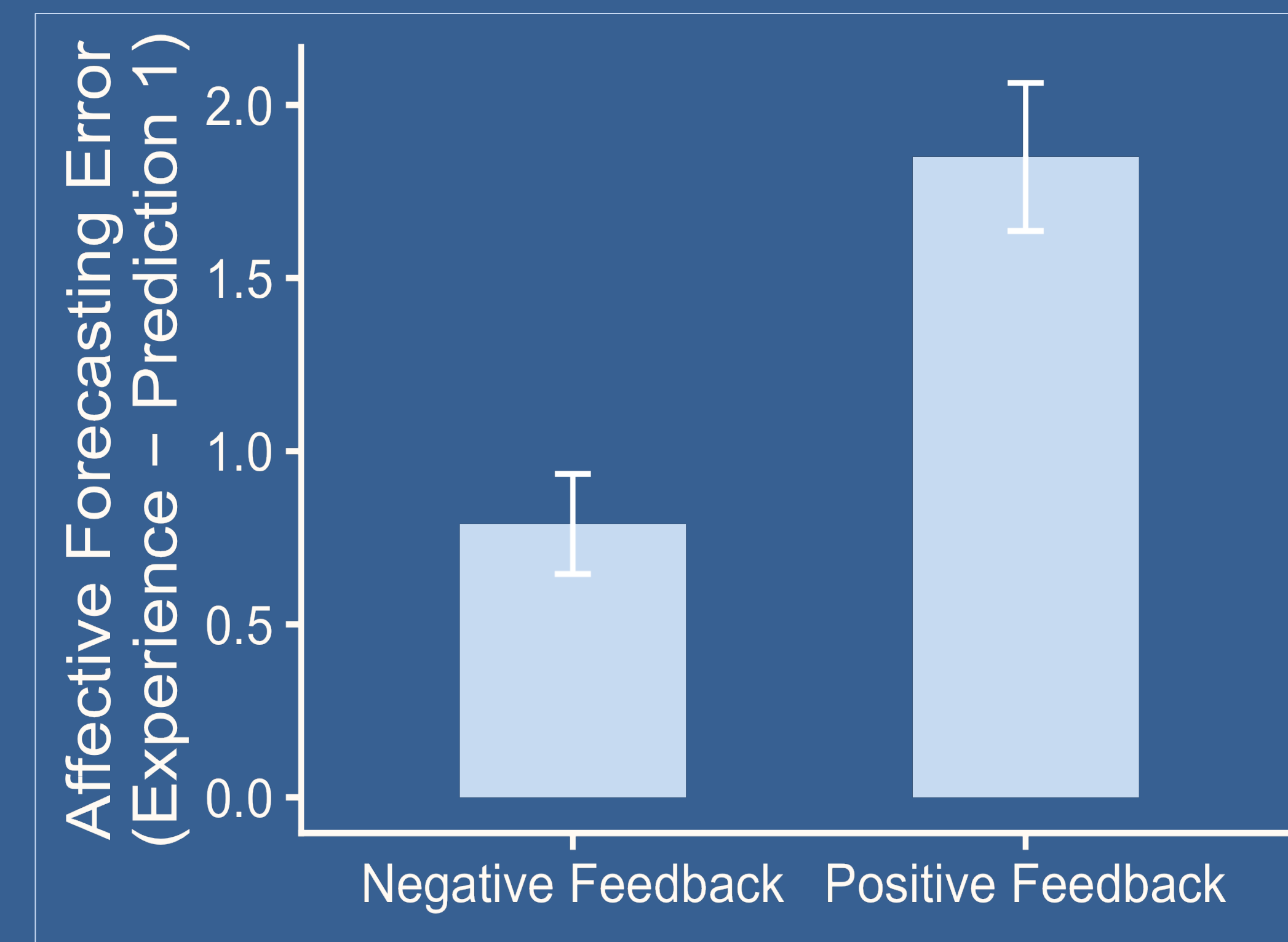
- 208 participants (Age: $M=18.94$, $SD=1.11$)
- 89% White; 80.8% Female

Procedure

- **Anagram Task**
 - AEPLC → PLACE
 - ADSHK → unsolvable
- Told task measures intelligence and performance would be compared to peers'
- **False Feedback:**
 - **Positive feedback:** Better than 97% of students
 - **Negative feedback:** Better than 26% of students
- **Emotion Ratings:**
 - *sad, disappointed, depressed, upset, anxious, angry, ashamed, frustrated, excited, proud, relieved, happy, neutral*
- **Prediction 1:** Before Task
- **Experience:** Immediately After False Feedback
- **Prediction 2:** Before Second Task
- **Questionnaires:**
 - Anxiety Symptom Severity: GAD-7⁴
 - Depression Symptom Severity: PHQ-8⁵

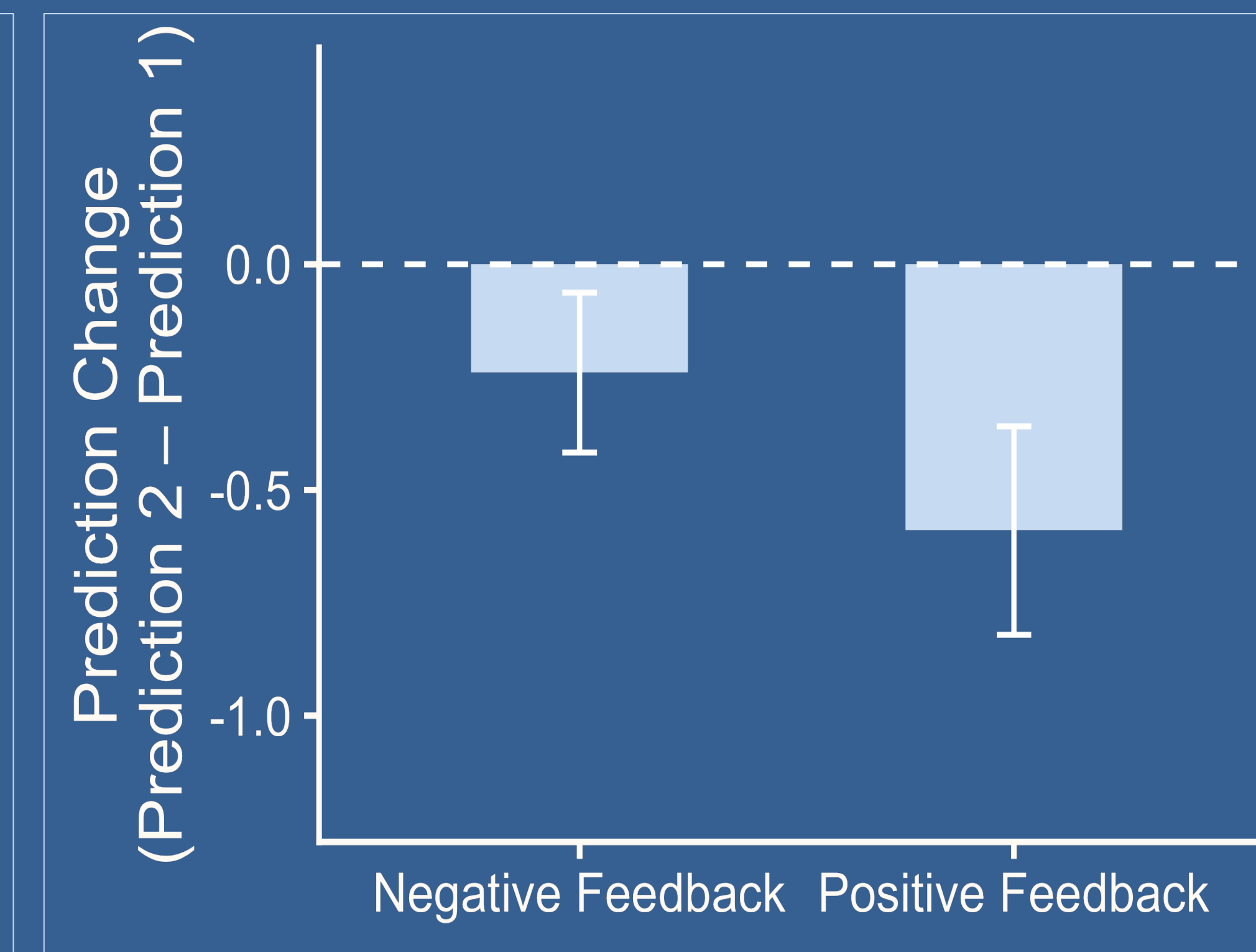
Results

Forecasting Error



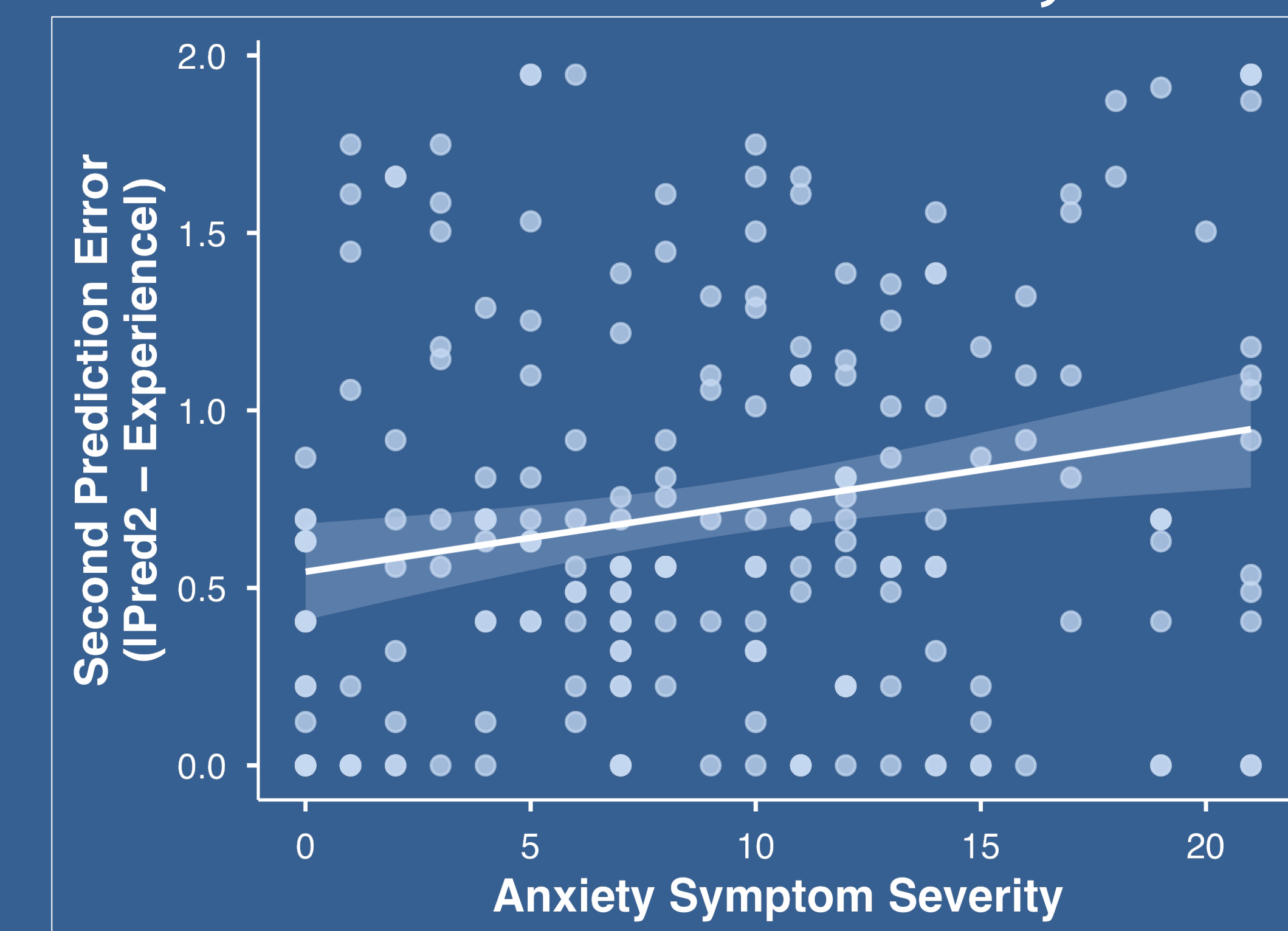
$t(206) = 4.14, p < .001, d = -.57$

Revised Predictions



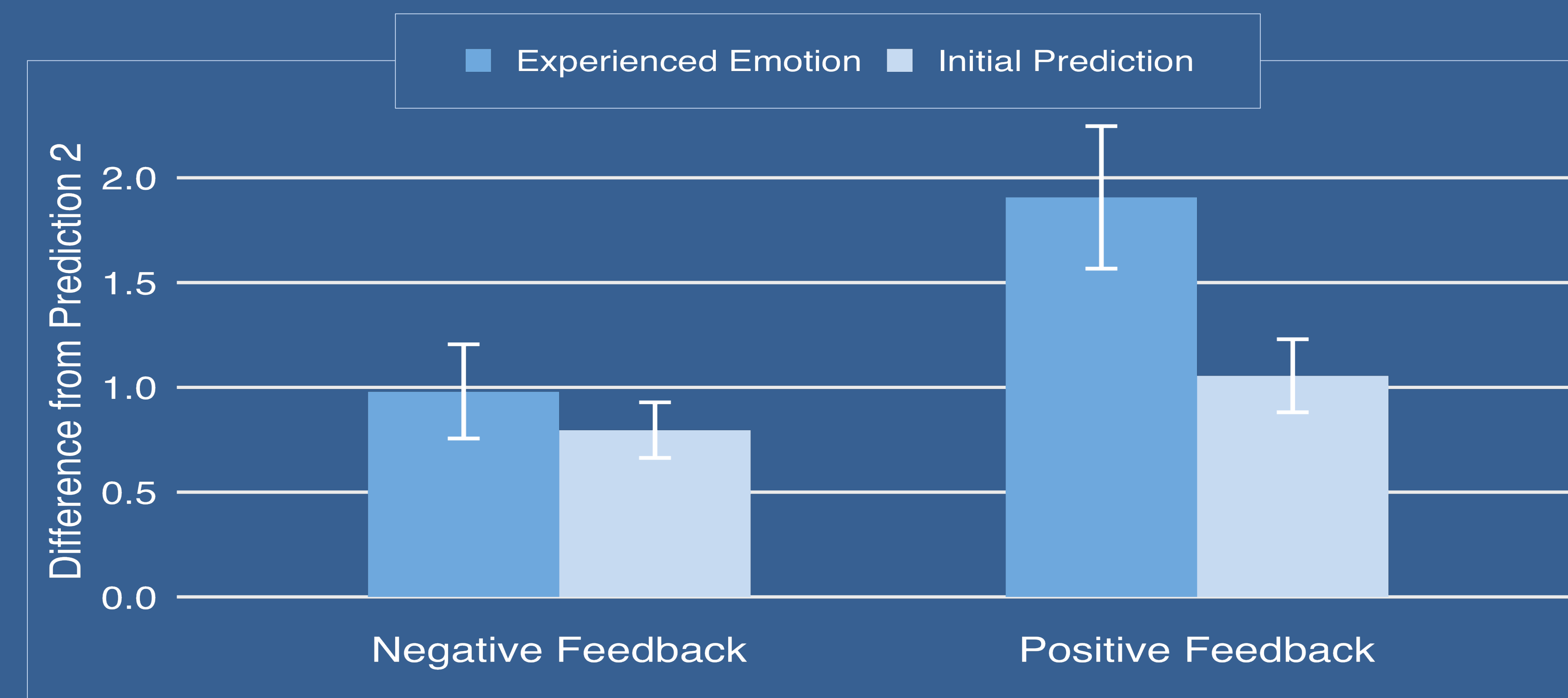
$t(206) = 2.35, p = .020, d = -.33$

Association with Anxiety



$r = .21, p = .003$

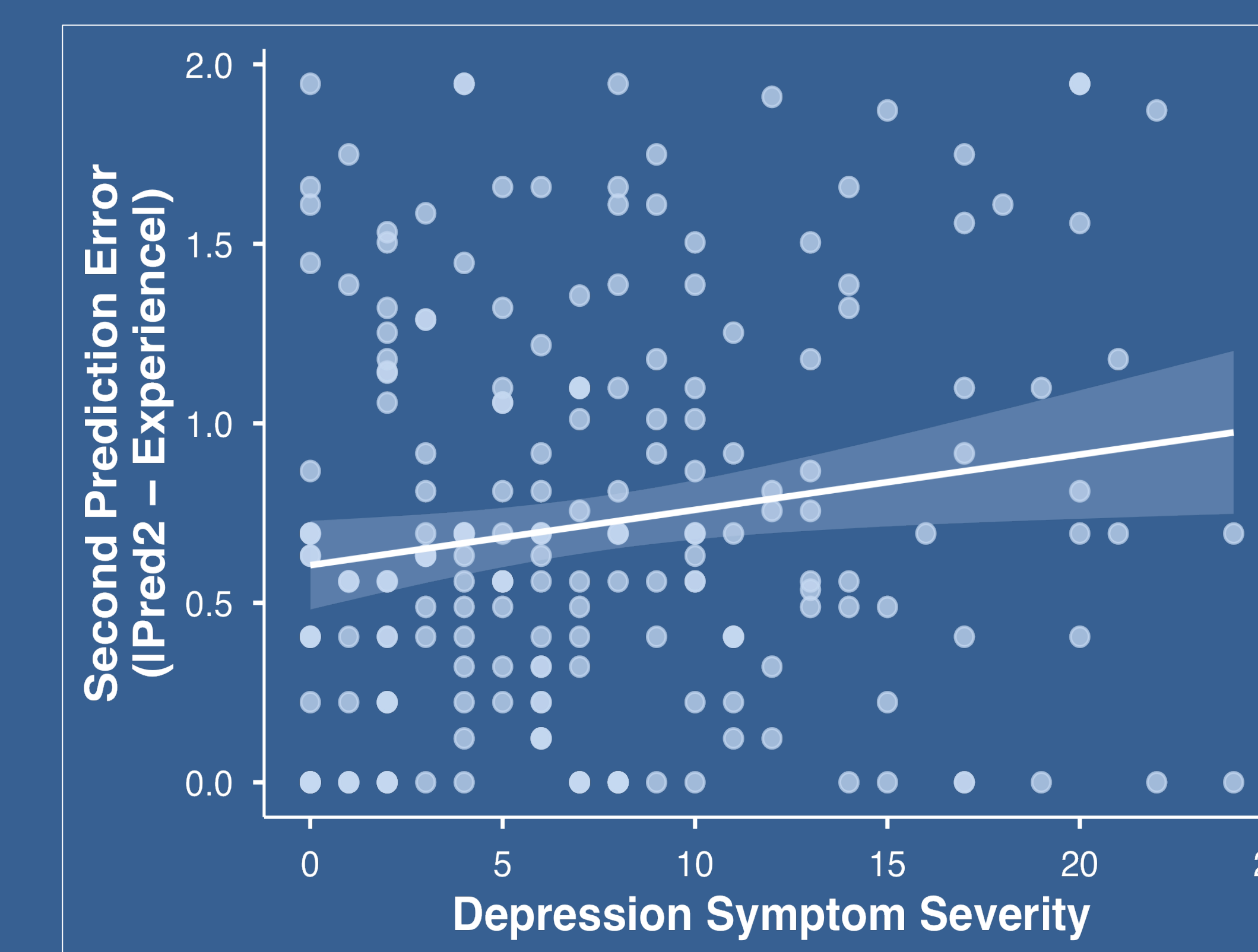
Anchoring Bias



$t(105) = 1.42, p = .158, d = .40$

$t(103) = 4.09, p < .001, d = .14$

Association with Depression



$r = .16, p = .020$

Discussion

- Individuals overestimated the intensity of the emotions they would feel in response to performance feedback, with greater overestimation for positive than negative emotions.
- Individuals revised their predictions to be less intense after experience, especially after positive feedback.
- Despite revisions, participants showed anchoring in the positive feedback condition, with second predictions remaining closer to initial predictions than experienced emotions; this was not significant in the negative false feedback condition.
- Participants with higher anxiety or depression symptoms showed less accurate updating, as their second predictions were further from their actual emotional experience.

References

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2. Hoerger, M., Quirk, S. W., Lucas, R. E., & Carr, T. H. (2010). Cognitive determinants of affective forecasting errors. *Judgment and Decision Making*, 5(5), 365-373.
3. Gilbert, D. T., Gill, M. J., & Wilson, T. D. (2002). The future is now: Temporal Correction in affective forecasting. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 88(1), 430-444.
4. Spitzer, R.L., Kroenke, K., Williams, J.B., et al. (2014). A brief measure for assessing generalized anxiety disorder: the GAD-7. *Arch Intern Med*, 166:1092-1097.
5. Kroenke, K., Strine, T.W., Spitzer, R.L., Williams, J.B., Berry, J.T., & Mokdad, A.H. (2008). The PHQ-8 as a measure of current depression in the general population. *J Affect Disorder*, 114(1-3):163-73.