

# Suppression of What Valence?

## Habitual Suppression of Positive Emotions and Negative Emotions Distinctively Predicts Well-being

**Chen-Wei “Felix” Yu<sup>1,2</sup>**, Jen-Ho Chang<sup>1,3</sup>  
1. National Taiwan University, Taiwan,  
2. Northwestern University, USA  
3. Academia Sinica, Taiwan  
felix.chenwei@u.northwestern.edu

### INTRO

- Most studies on expressive suppression has not considered the role of emotional valence, despite it being a critical dimension in virtually every emotion theory
- We argued and empirically demonstrated that suppression of positive and of negative emotions should be separately measured and analyzed.

### METHODS

Across two studies and four datasets ( $N = 684$ ), we examined the following two questions with suppression:

1. Separability
  - Mean-level comparison
  - Inter-item correlation
  - Internal consistency of the scale
2. Importance of such separability
  - Multiple linear regression

## RESULTS

### 1. Separability

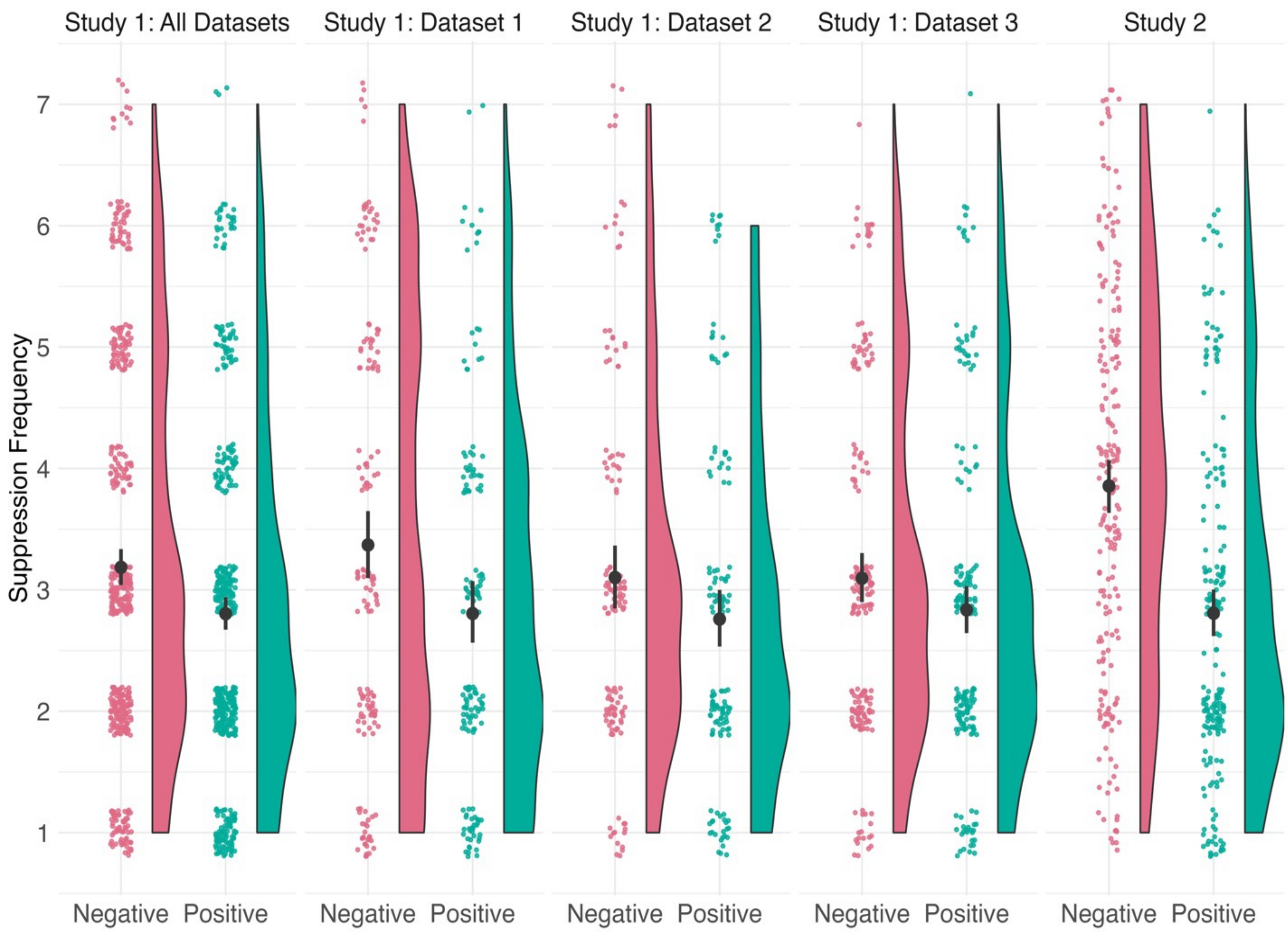
- Suppression of positive (vs. negative) emotions was engaged less (right figure), was less central in people’s conception of expressive suppression, and the two were only moderately correlated

### 2. Unique Effects of Each

- Suppression of positive emotions consistently predicted worse well-being, whereas that of negative emotions consistently showed null associations (right table)

## DISCUSSION

- These results challenge the field to have better conceptual precision of expressive suppression and its measurement.
- It furthers call for a reexamination of previous research by asking “Suppression of what valence?”



Standardized regression coefficients ( $\beta$ ) of multiple linear regression of Study 2

	Suppression of ...	
Well-being indices	Positive	Negative
Satisfaction with life	-.23**	-.01
Psychological well-being	-.49***	-.05
Autonomy	-.24***	-.13 <sup>†</sup>
Environmental mastery	-.39***	.07
Personal growth	-.30***	-.08
Positive relations with others	-.33***	-.04
Purpose in life	-.27***	-.08
Self-acceptance	-.44***	.03
Depression	.38***	-.07

Note. <sup>†</sup>  $p < .10$ , \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .