

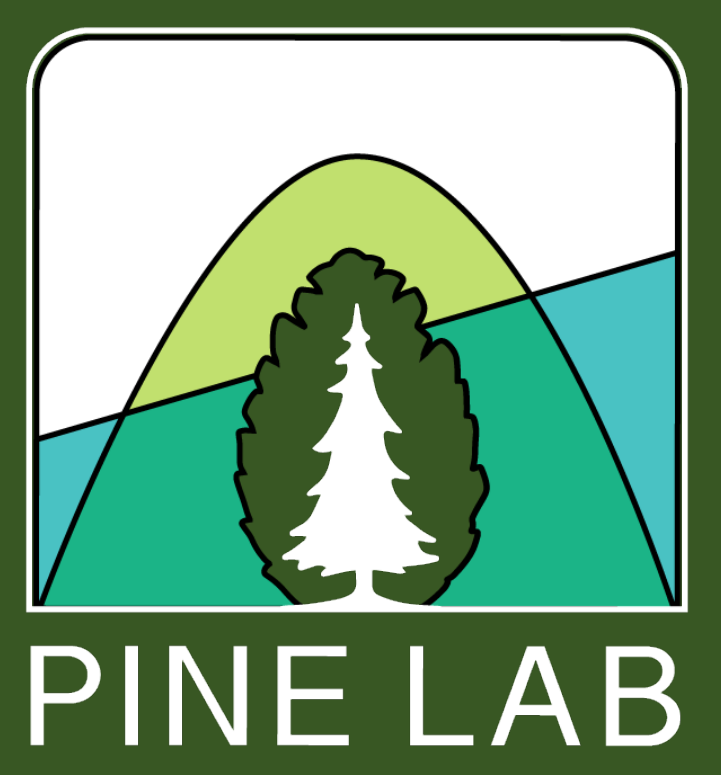


Early Life Adversity Reveals Adaptive Use of Absorption in Music

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Introduction

- Music listening is often identified as a pleasurable experience that individuals use to regulate emotions and behavior in every day life¹
- Early life adversity (ELA) encompasses experiences across dimensions of threat, deprivation, and unpredictability and is associated with higher levels of mental health difficulties over the lifespan²
- Exposure to ELA may change how adults engage with and use music to regulate themselves

Research Questions:

- How does early life adversity, with respect to developmental timing and dimension of adversity, impact adult music engagement?
- How do differences in music engagement relate to mental health and resilience in adulthood?

Methods

STUDY 1:

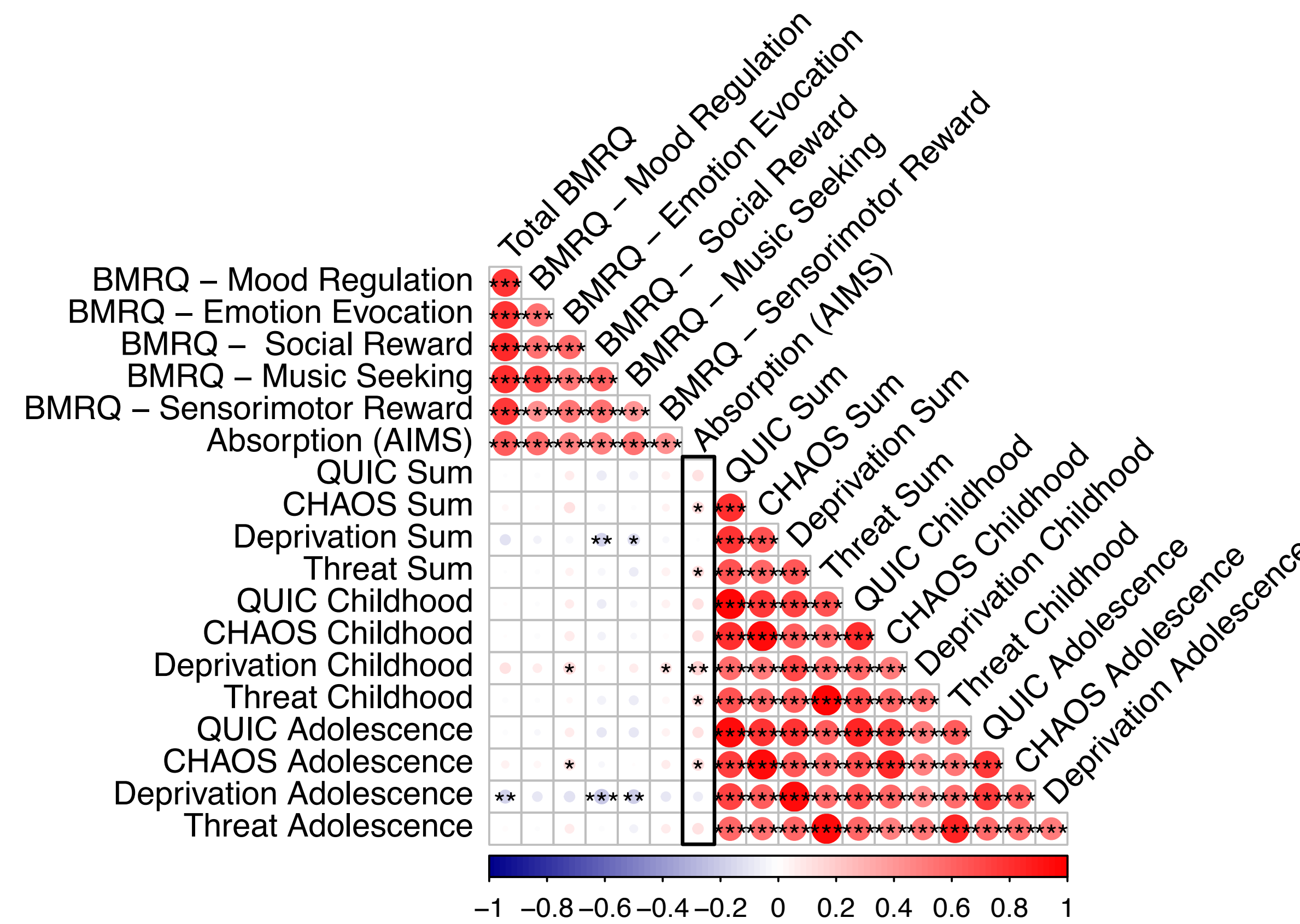
- 254 participants (140F; mean age = 38) recruited from a previous experiment
- Participants completed the Questionnaire of Unpredictability in Childhood³ (QUIC), the short-form Confusion, Hubbub, and Order Scale⁴ (CHAOS), McLaughlin Deprivation & Threat Scales⁵, Healthy-Unhealthy Music Scale⁶ (HUMS), and the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale⁷ (CD-RISC-10)
- All retrospective adversity measures were reported for both childhood (6-12 years) and adolescence (13-18 years)
- Participants also completed the Extended Barcelona Music Reward Questionnaire⁸ (eBMRQ) in the previous study

STUDY 2:

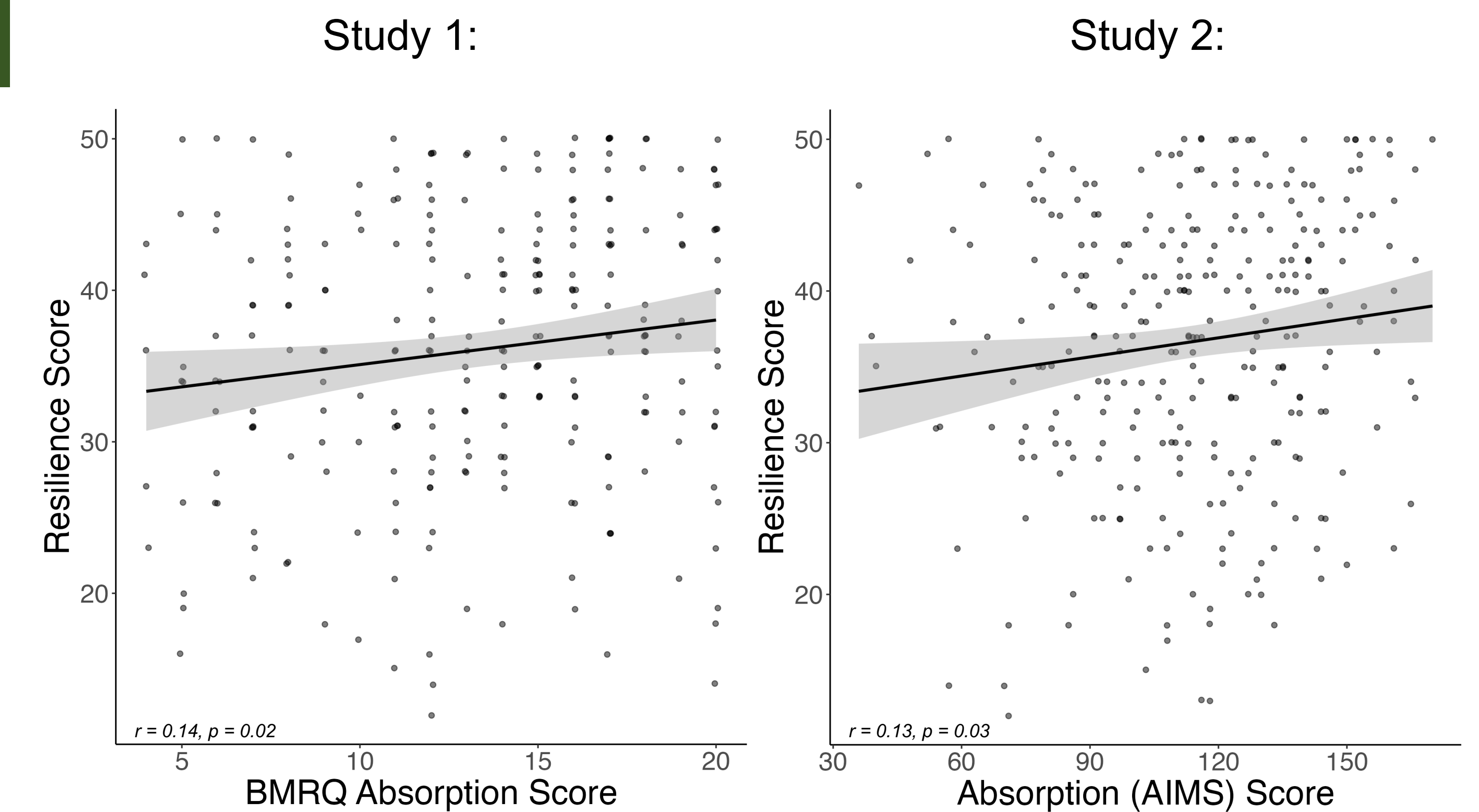
- 288 participants (141F; mean age = 38) recruited from another previous experiment
- Participants completed the QUIC, the full CHAOS, McLaughlin Deprivation & Threat Scales, the CD-RISC-10, and the Escapism Scale⁹ adapted for music
- For a more sensitive measure of absorption into music, participants also completed the Absorption in Music Scale¹⁰ (AIMS)
- Participants also completed the Barcelona Music Reward Questionnaire¹¹ (BMRQ) in the previous study

Study 1: All dimensions of ELA are positively associated with reports of absorption into music

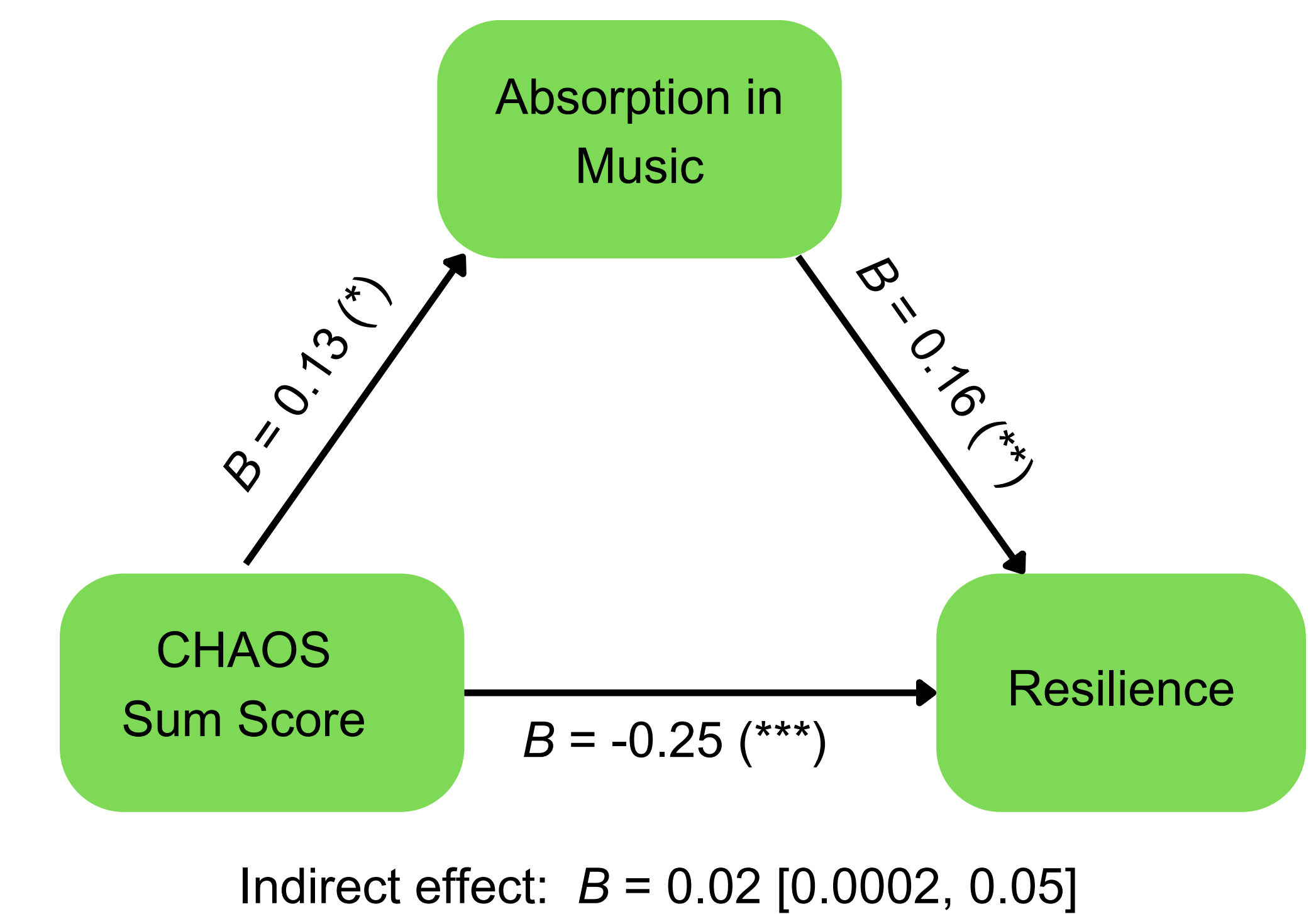
Study 2: Conceptual replication of associations for CHAOS and Threat Scores with absorption (via AIMS)



Is absorption into music adaptive?



Study 2: Absorption mediates the relationship between CHAOS & resilience



DEVELOPMENTAL TIMING:

AIMS scores did not mediate this relationship for childhood CHAOS scores (indirect effect: $B = 0.02$ [-0.001, 0.05]), but it did for adolescent CHAOS scores (indirect effect: $B = 0.02$ [0.001, 0.05]).

Discussion

- Individuals who report experiencing early life adversity also report being highly absorbed by music.
- This relationship is observed in retrospective reports of both childhood and adolescence experiences.
- “Escaping” adverse contexts into music is one way individuals with ELA develop resilience.
- AIMS did not mediate the relationship between exposure to threat and resilience because it is likely not advantageous to psychologically escape these contexts.
- CHAOS – AIMS – Resilience mediation driven by adolescent CHAOS scores, likely due to increased agency in music listening during this time.¹²

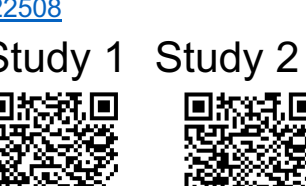
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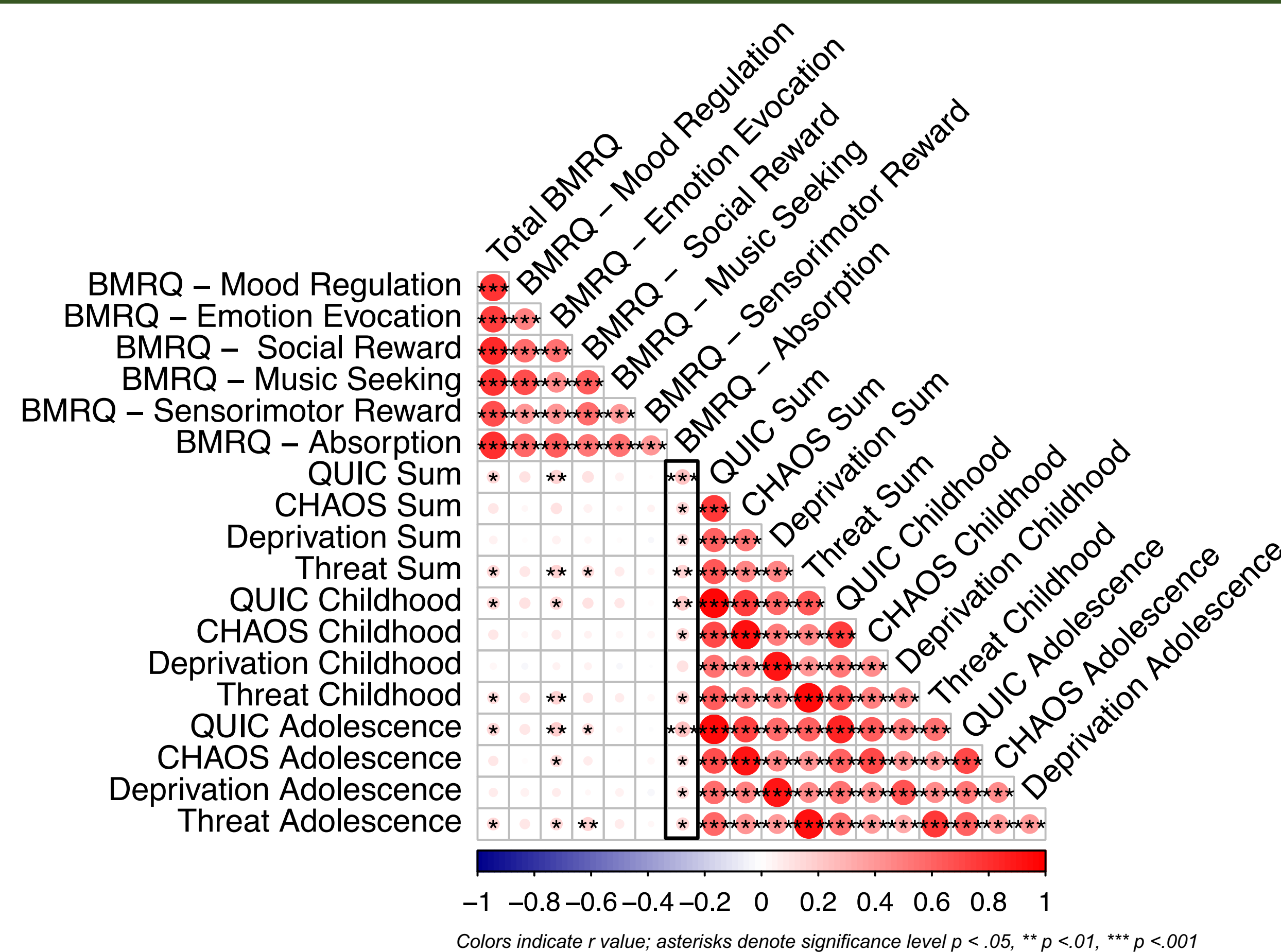
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Model: Escapism ~ Mood Regulation + Emotion Evocation + Social Reward + Music Seeking + Sensorimotor Reward + Absorption



- Absorption: “an individual’s ability and willingness to allow music to draw them into an emotional experience”¹⁰

“While listening to music, I may become so involved that I may forget about myself and my surroundings.”

Study 2: Absorption into music associated with using music for escapism

- Items on the HUMS scale indicate music listening as a form of escapism:
“I hide in my music because nobody understands me, and it blocks people out”

