Escaping into Pixels: How Personal Traits and Cultural Values Shape Short Video Platform Usage

Zhixin (Mason) Li, Clara B. Rebello, Dr. Gerald Cupchik
Department of Psychology, University of Toronto Scarborough
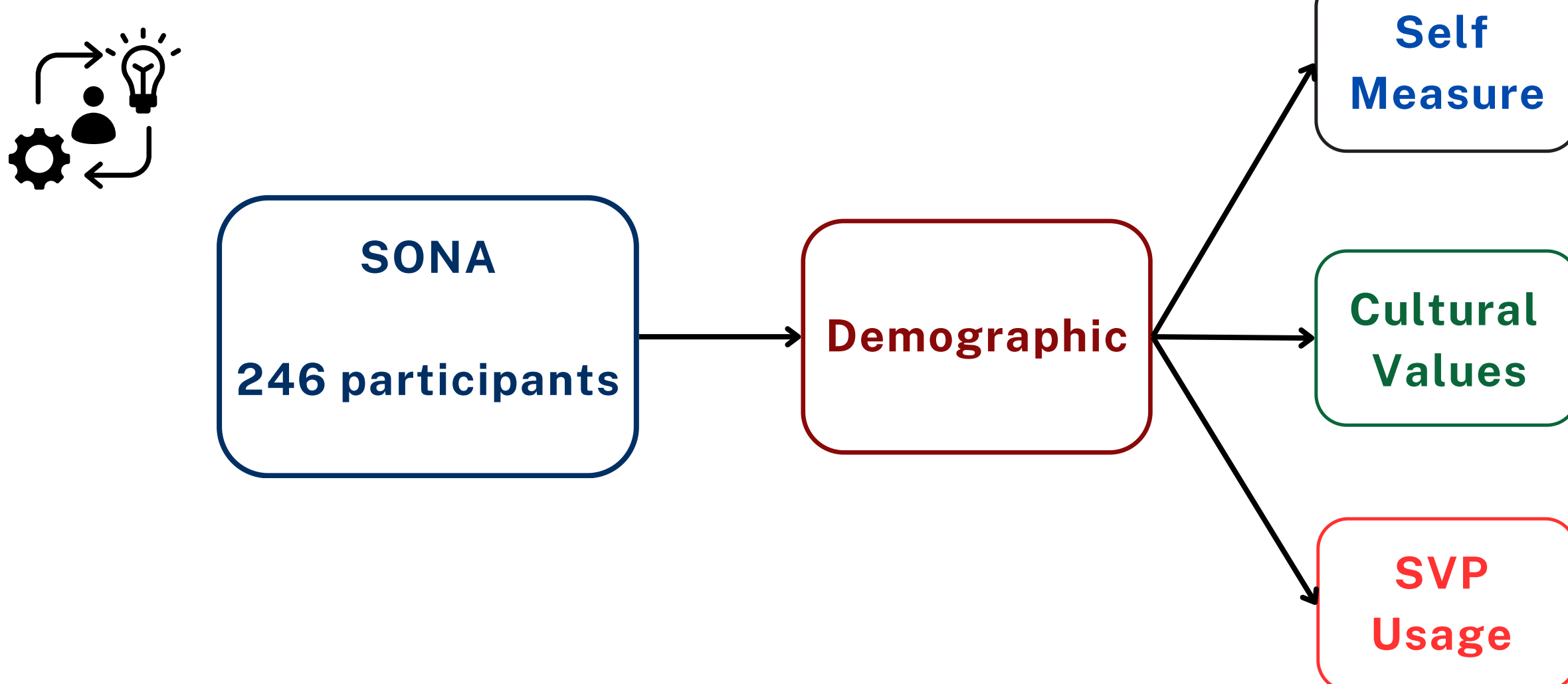
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO SCARBOROUGH

INTRODUCTION

Problem: The explosive growth of short video platforms (SVPs) has raised concerns about overuse. Existing research focuses on China, leaving a gap in understanding cultural values (e.g., individualism vs. collectivism) and self-perception (confidence, stress) in shaping engagement.
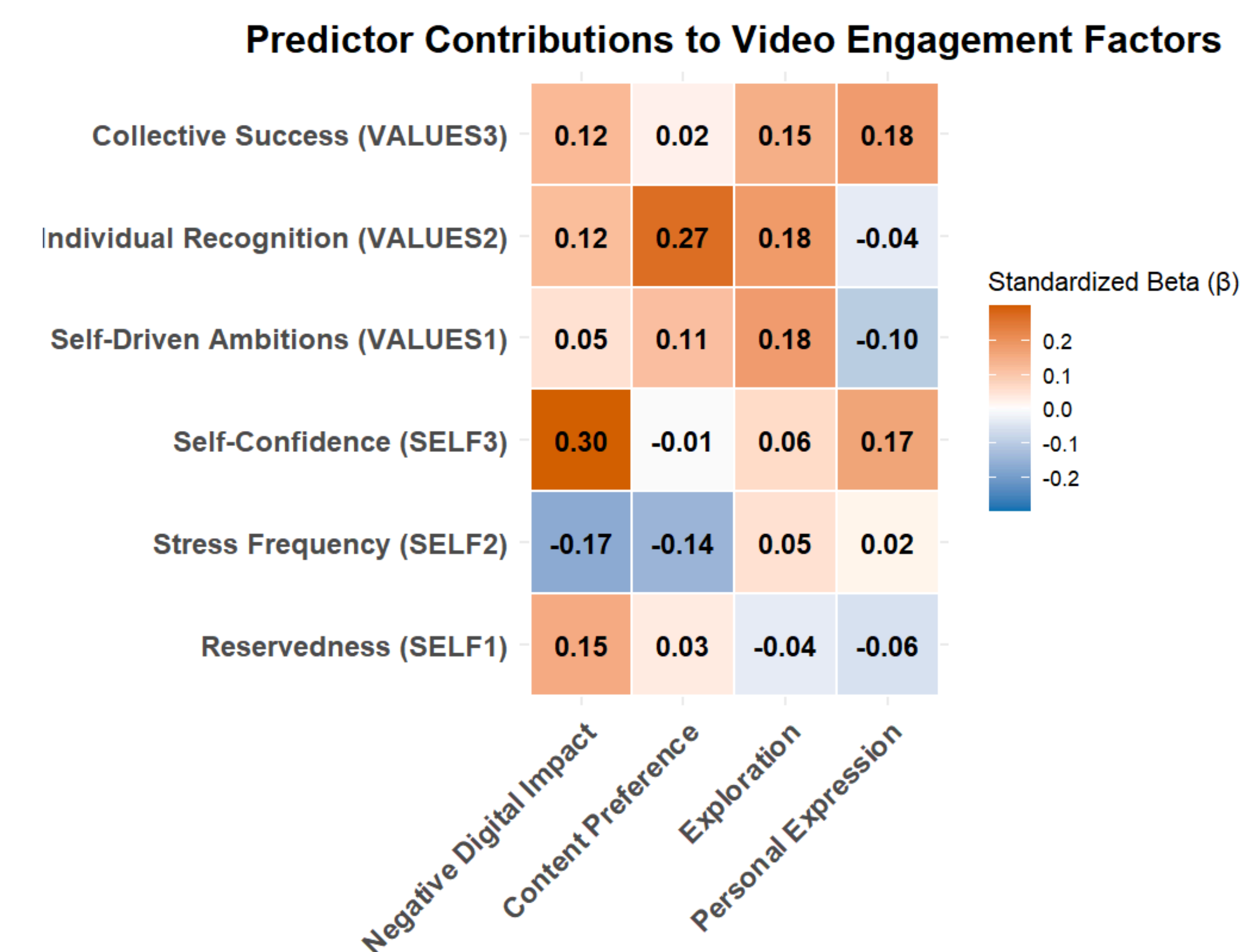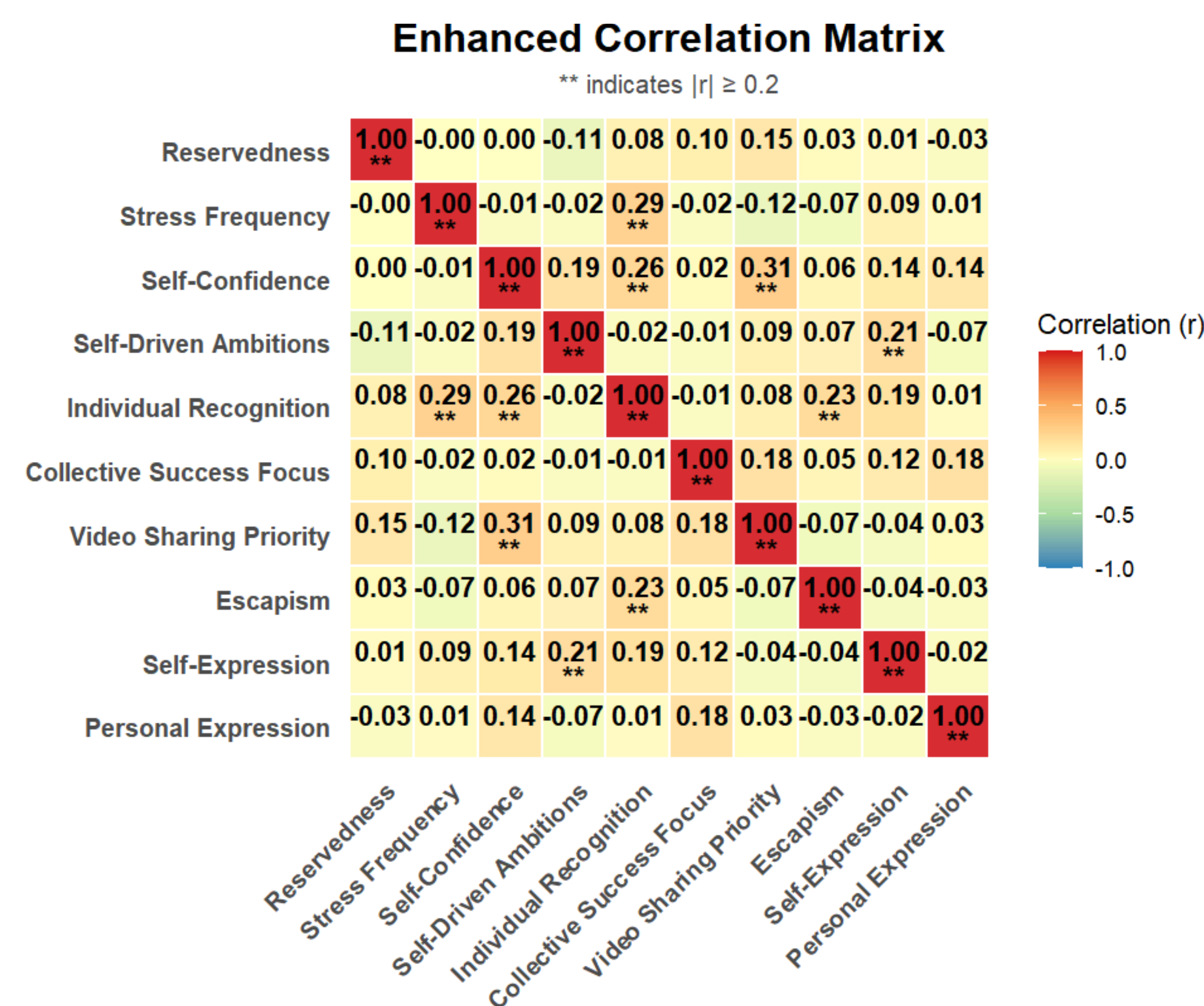
OBJECTIVE

Aims: This study investigates how personal traits (self-confidence, stress, identity exploration) and cultural values (individualism vs. collectivism) interact with algorithmic design to shape engagement on short video platforms (SVPs).

Research Question: How do personal traits and cultural values interact with platform features to predict SVP engagement, particularly in terms of validation-seeking behaviors, stress-driven escapism, and algorithmic reinforcement of cultural norms?

METHODOLOGY

SONA
246 participants → Demographic →
- Self Measure
- Cultural Values
- SVP Usage

RESULTS

Enhanced Correlation Matrix
** indicates |r| ≥ 0.2

Predictor Contributions to Video Engagement Factors

KEY FINDINGS

1. **Self-Confidence & Recognition**: Moderate correlation between individual recognition and self-confidence. Paradoxically, self-confidence predicted negative digital impact, linked to overexposure or validation-seeking.
2. **Stress & Escapism**: Stress-driven users showed escapist tendencies, with SVPs used for coping, particularly under high stress.
3. **Cultural Hybridity**: Users blended individualistic self-expression (e.g., personal achievements) with collectivist goals (e.g., community building), driven by both autonomy and communal values.

DISCUSSION

1. **Stress & Non-Linear Use: Stress** correlated with escapism but reduced passive engagement, suggesting SVPs serve as intermittent coping tools.

Dual Pathways:
   a. Confidence-Driven Recognition: Active sharing for validation, risking burnout.
   b. Stress-Driven Recognition: Compulsive engagement for temporary relief, amplified by algorithmic rewards.
   c. Platform Design: Algorithms prioritized visibility metrics (likes, followers), reinforcing validation cycles.

Limitations: gender imbalance (80% female), Western-oriented multicultural sample, and stress-measurement wording issues.

CONCLUSION

SVPs amplify cultural and psychological vulnerabilities via algorithmic design, prioritizing visibility at the cost of well-being.

Future Research: Cross-cultural comparisons, longitudinal studies on cultural adaptation, and gender-balanced samples.

Framework Contribution: Cultural Dualism in SVP Engagement bridges cultural psychology and behavioural addiction, advocating for ethical design that honours diverse motivations.

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