



# Witnessing Rudeness – For Better or Worse

The effect of Witnessing Rudeness on Prosociality Toward Uninvolved Yet Related Others

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## SUMMARY

### Witnessing Rudeness (WR) Effect on Prosociality:

- WR generally **reduces prosociality** toward others.
- Conversely, WR **increases prosociality** toward the target of rudeness (ToR).

### Problem is ...

Many individuals the witness interacts with after WR are neither; they are **uninvolved third parties** who are somewhat connected to the ToR.

How will witnesses behave in social exchanges with these third parties?

**Answer:** Findings from four studies (N=1391) show that after WR –

- ✓ **Empathy:** increases prosociality.
- ✓ **Distress:** decreases prosociality.
- ✓ **Neuroticism:** bounds these effects.

### Contributions:

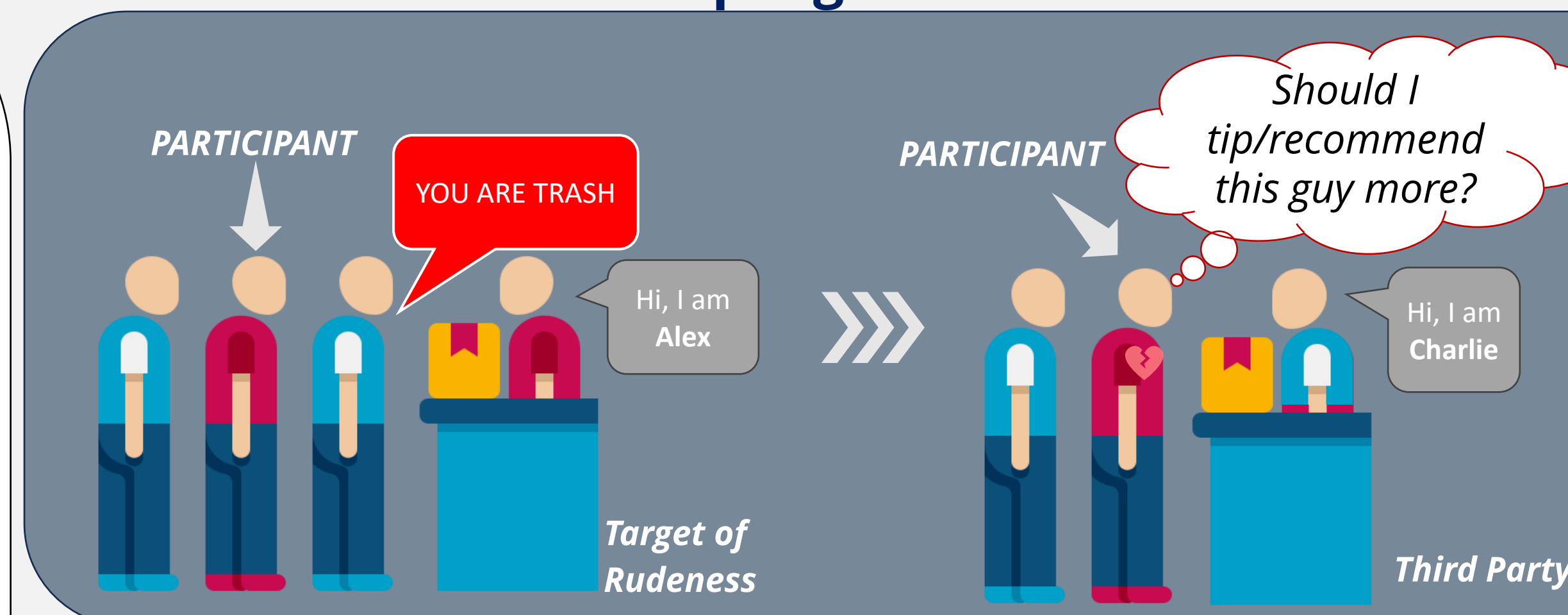
- ♀ A comprehensive framework addressing the WR's effects on prosociality.
- ♀ Highlights the impact of WR on prosociality toward third parties.

### Practically:

- ♀ Rudeness outcomes may not always harm business if handled strategically.

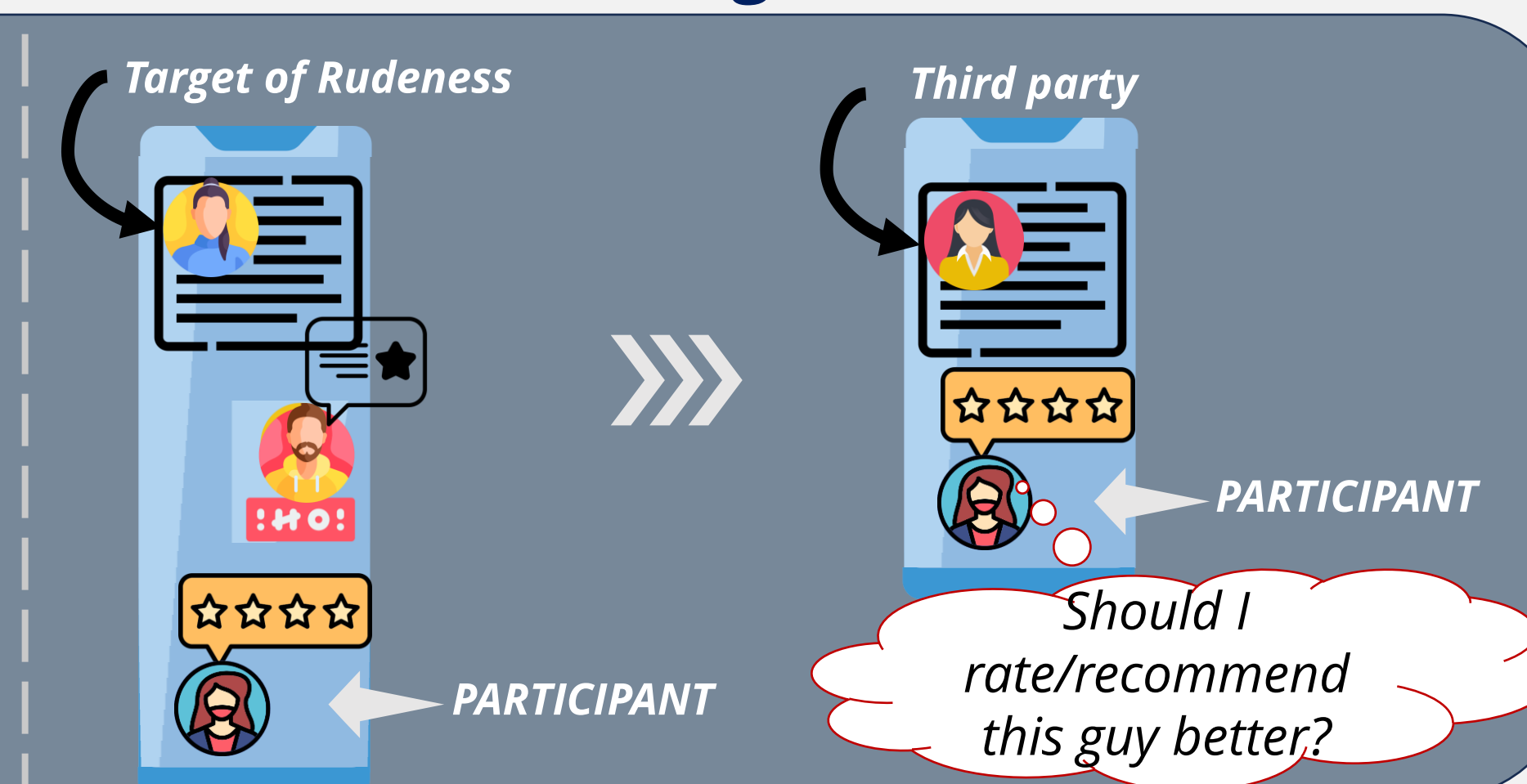
## STUDIES 1-2

### Coffee-Shop Vignette



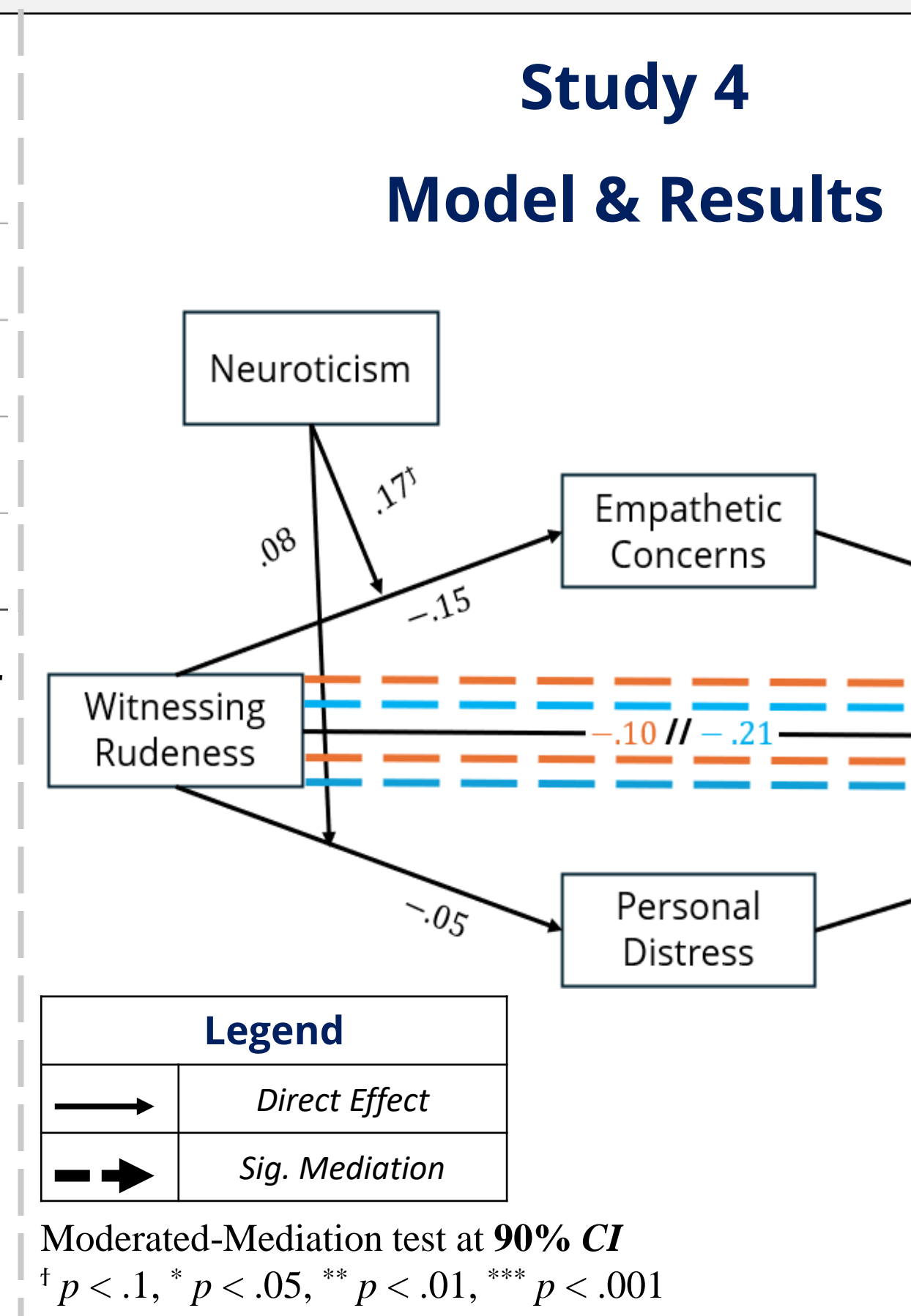
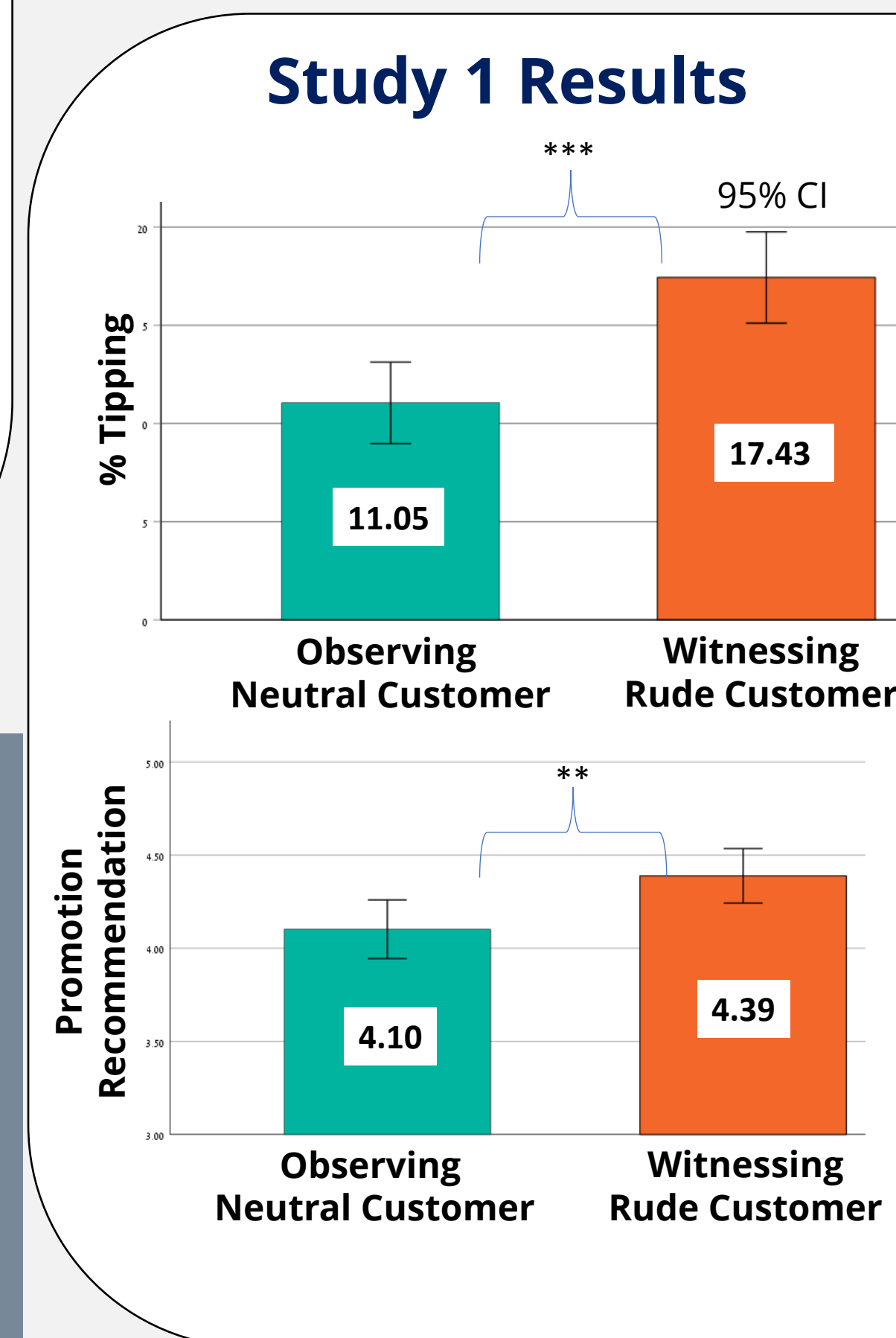
## STUDIES 3-4

### Creative Writing Social Network



## OVERVIEW OF STUDIES

STUDY	Total N=1391 (Prolific)	Type of Study	Main Objective	Rudeness Man.	Prosocial.	Empathy & Distress	Neurotic
1 (N=186)	Coffee-shop Vignette	Direct effect		Rude (vs. neutral) in-line customer	1. %Tip 2. Rec. Strength	--	--
2 (N=405)	Coffee-shop Vignette	Mechanism: Empathy & Distress			1. %Tip 2. Rec. Likelihood	X	--
3 (N=399)	In-experiment Social Network	External validity: real time manipulation & behavior		Rude (vs. non-rude) review in social media feed	1. Rate post 2. Rec. post writer	X	--
4 (N=401)	In-experiment Social Network	Boundary cond.: Neuroticism			1. Rate post 2. Rec. post-writer	X	X



### Moderated Mediation (M.M) Test of neuroticism

Witnessing Rudeness → Empathetic Concerns → Stars Rating	At NT Low	At NT Median	At NT High	M.M. Index
Boundary	.03	-.01	.09	
	.03 <sup>†</sup>	.03	.13	
	.04 <sup>†</sup>	.04	.18	
M.M. Index	.03 <sup>†</sup>	.002	.08	✓
Witnessing Rudeness → Personal Distress → Stars Rating	At NT Low	At NT Median	At NT High	M.M. Index
Boundary	-.01	-.05	-.004	
	-.03 <sup>†</sup>	-.06	-.003	
	-.04 <sup>†</sup>	-.09	-.005	
M.M. Index	-.01	-.03	.002	✗
Witnessing Rudeness → Empathetic Concerns → Recommendation	At NT Low	At NT Median	At NT High	M.M. Index
Boundary	.08	-.02	.19	
	.17 <sup>†</sup>	.09	.26	
	.24 <sup>†</sup>	.13	.37	
M.M. Index	.08 <sup>†</sup>	.006	.16	✓
Witnessing Rudeness → Personal Distress → Recommendation	At NT Low	At NT Median	At NT High	M.M. Index
Boundary	-.02	-.06	-.005	
	-.04 <sup>†</sup>	-.08	-.004	
	-.05 <sup>†</sup>	-.11	-.006	
M.M. Index	-.01	-.04	.003	✗

**Main takeaway: Prosociality toward third parties hinges on the witness's emotional reaction of empathy and distress, which are shaped by their level of neuroticism.**