

# STABILITY OF FIRST IMPRESSIONS AND THE ROLE OF OPENNESS TO OTHERS' PERSPECTIVES

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## INTRODUCTION

- The goal of this research is to see the diverse thought processes and outside influences that affect the formation of impressions. This specific research is on the stability of first impressions when challenged with a social influence that could have an impact on impression formation.
- **Does a person's perception of the stability of their first impression relate to how much they listen to the opinions of a close other or acquaintance when forming a first impression?**
- We expect a significant negative relationship between people's perceived stability of their first impressions of a person and the extent to which they listen to an acquaintance's opinions of that person. However, we also expect that people's perceived stability of their first impressions of a person will not relate to the extent to which they listen to a close-other's opinions of that person. That is, people will report a high tendency to listen to a close-other's opinions of another person regardless of how stable they perceive their own impressions.

## METHODS

Participants:

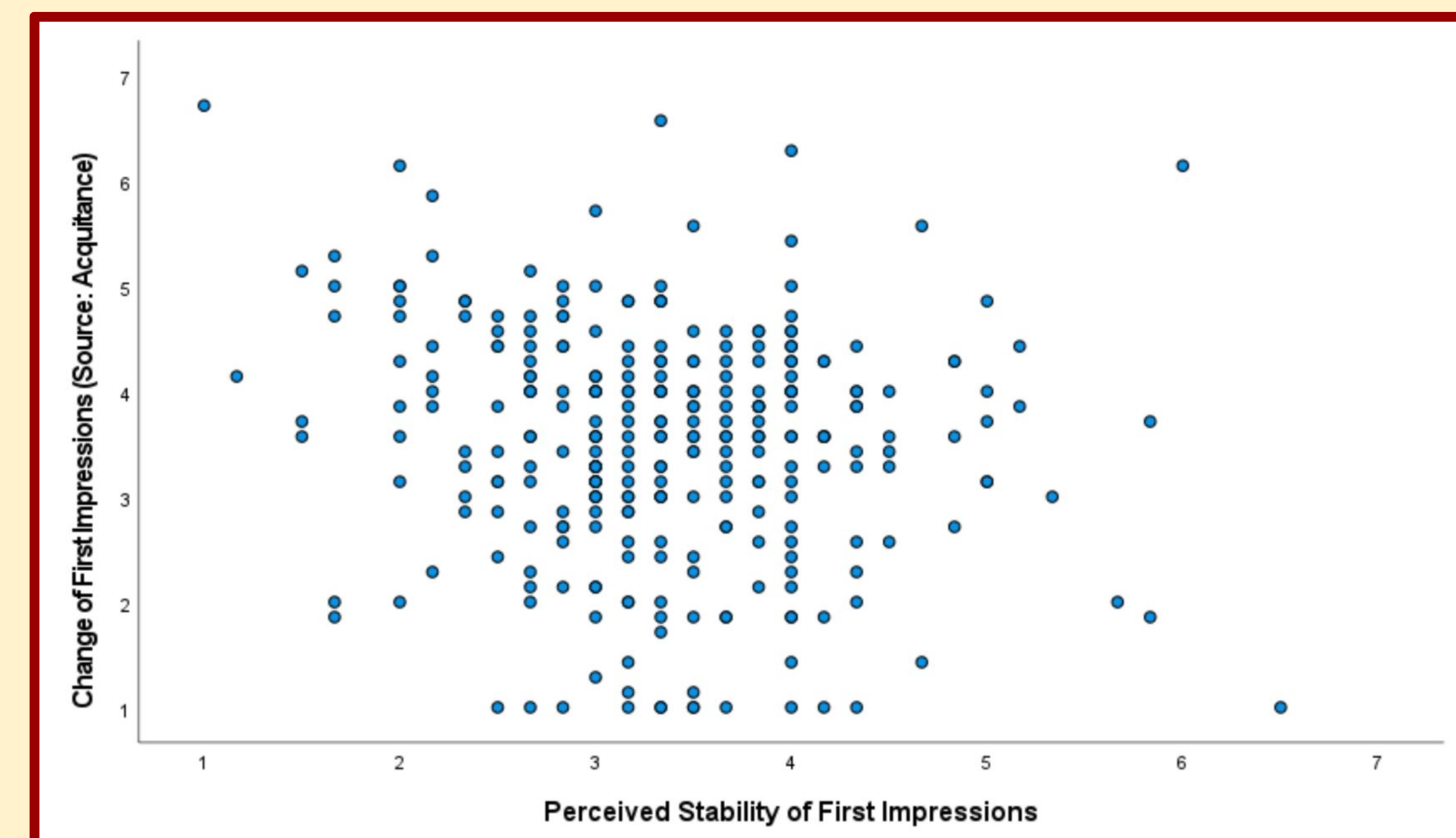
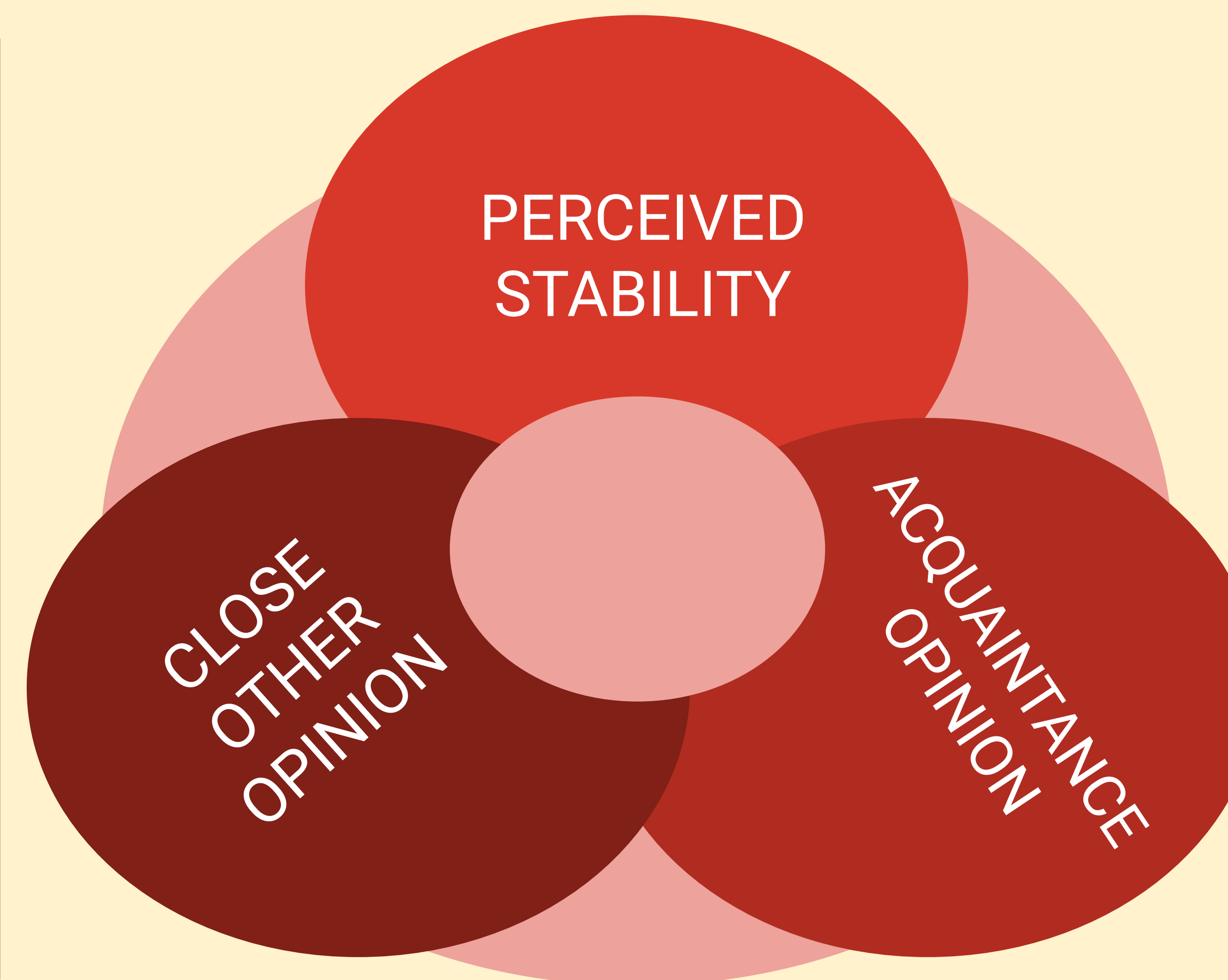
- 300 participants completed the questionnaire. The participants included 140 males, 155 females, and 5 non-binary with ages from 18 to 83 with the mean age of 41.87. The questionnaire was completed via Prolific online survey platform with a \$8 per hour compensation given to those who didn't fail two attention questions. 8 people failed on one attention question and 1 failed more than one attention question and was dropped from the analyses.

Materials:

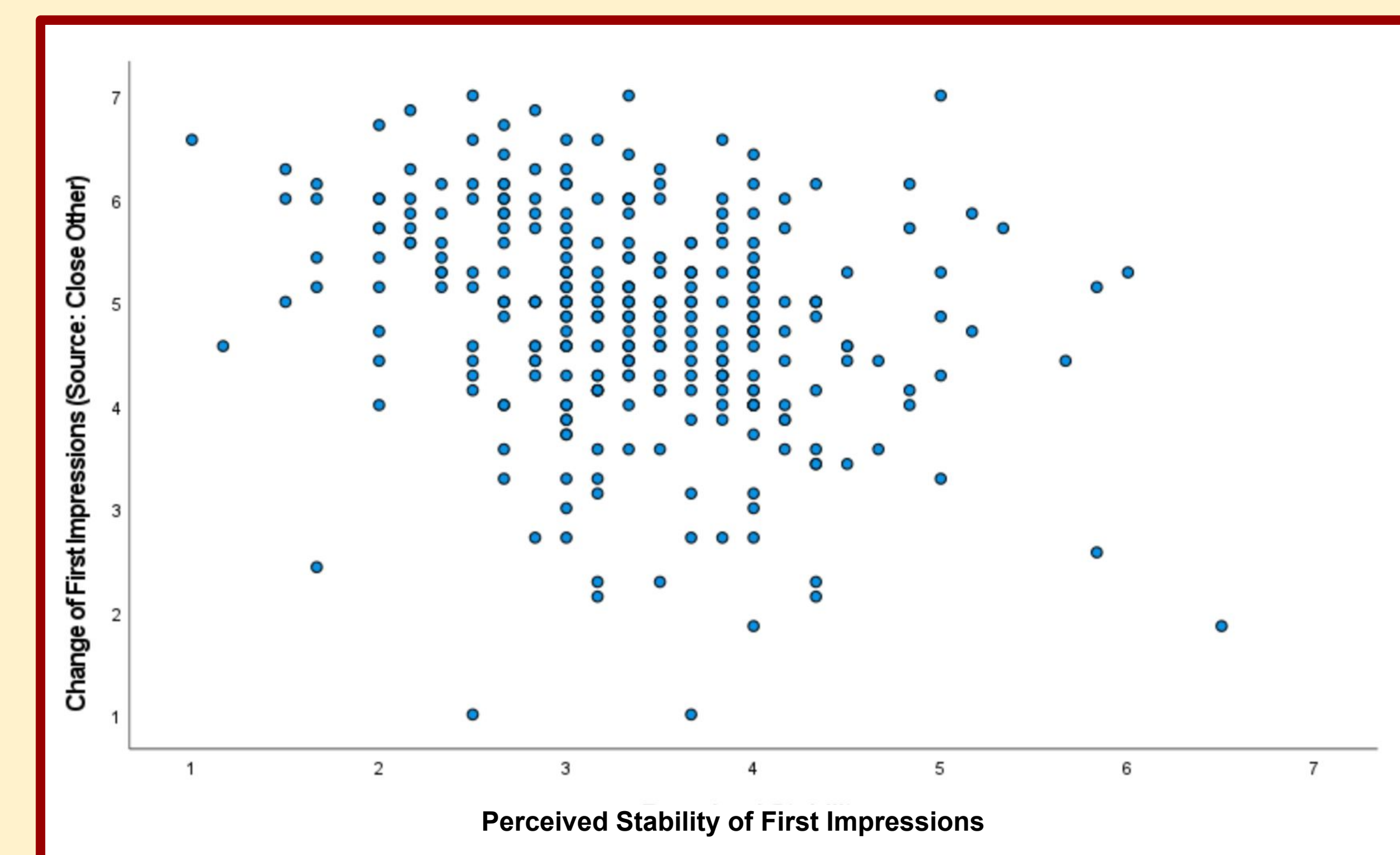
- The two variables that are being measured are the perceived stability of a person's first impression and the influence of the acquaintance and the influence of a close other. Both variables were tested with relevant measures (see below) including items rated on 7-point scales (1: strongly disagree, 7: strongly agree).
  - Evidence-Based Stability Scale: To measure perceived stability of impressions, a scenario was given to the participant that they were in a grocery talking to a man/woman, then later that week the participant saw the person again in a different grocery store.
    - Example: If our first encounter was positive and the second encounter was negative, I would change my impression towards more negative.
    - Number of items: 11
    - Cronbach's alpha: .832
  - Social Stability Scale: To measure the social influence on impressions, we asked the participant to put the initials of someone they considered a trusted close other and another person considered an acquaintance to fill in the blanks of the questions.
    - Example: I reconsider my positive first impression when \_\_\_\_ tells me a bad thing about the person
    - Number of items: 13 for the acquaintance and trusted others
    - Cronbach's alpha for acquaintance: .940
    - Cronbach's alpha for trusted close other: .863

Procedure:

- The participants completed the questionnaire online after filling out the consent form, approved by the International Review Board. The questionnaire took less than 15 minutes.



Scatter Plot for Acquaintance:  $r = -.146, p = .012$



Scatterplot for Trusted Close Other:  $r = -.273, p < .001$

## RESULTS

The correlation between perceived stability of a person's first impression and the tendency to listen to a trusted close other when forming first impressions was negative and significant. This means that when a person's perceived stability of first impressions was high, they had a lower tendency to listen to a trusted close other's opinion. These results were inconsistent with the hypothesis stating that people will report a high tendency to listen to a close-other's opinions of another person regardless of how stable they perceive their own impressions. The correlation between the perceived stability of a person's first impression and the tendency to listen to an acquaintance's opinions when forming first impressions was negative and significant as expected. The results depict that if a person's perceived stability of their first impressions was high then they would be less likely to listen to others' opinions, regardless of the other person being a close other or just an acquaintance.

## DISCUSSION

- People's perspectives on their first impressions' stability related to their openness to listen to an acquaintance or close other's opinion of their first impression.
  - As stability increased, openness to listen decreased
- This research has implied that people are aware (at least to some level) of the stability of their first impressions
  - Meta-Cognition vs Automatic thought process
- Future research can be conducted with a non-U.S. sample and a more collectivistic culture. Individualistic culture/values revolve on thinking mainly on the self unlike a collectivistic culture where people focus more on the community. People in collectivistic cultures may listen to trusted others more when forming first impressions, regardless of how they construe the stability of their impressions.

References

