The Positive Psychology of
Music and Human Flourishing

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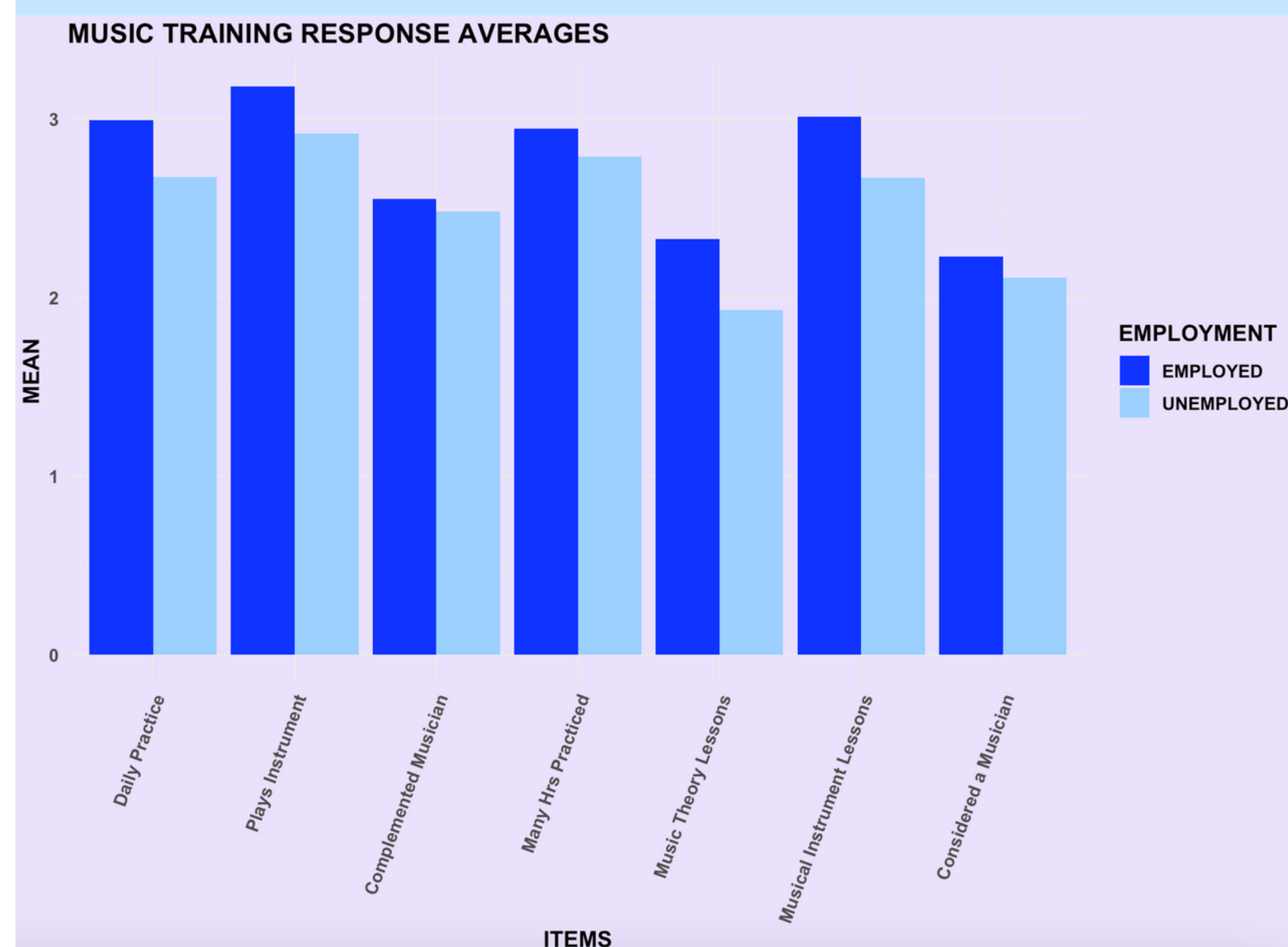Dr. Christa Mahlobo, Penn SAS, Positive Psychology Center

Introduction

- Positive psychology looks at increasing **well-being** rather than treating specific illness
- Flourishing includes hedonic and eudaimonic outcomes: in this study, **engagement, meaning, life satisfaction, positive feelings, and negative feelings** were used
- Aimed at understanding how different aspects of people's relationship with music could impact these flourishing outcomes
- Secondarily, looked at the impact of **employment status**

Methods

809 participants completed a **survey** asking questions regarding their **well-being** as well as questions regarding their **relationship with music** on a 5-point Likert scale. Questions were asked regarding their **musical training**, **intensity of music preferences**, and **types of music usage**
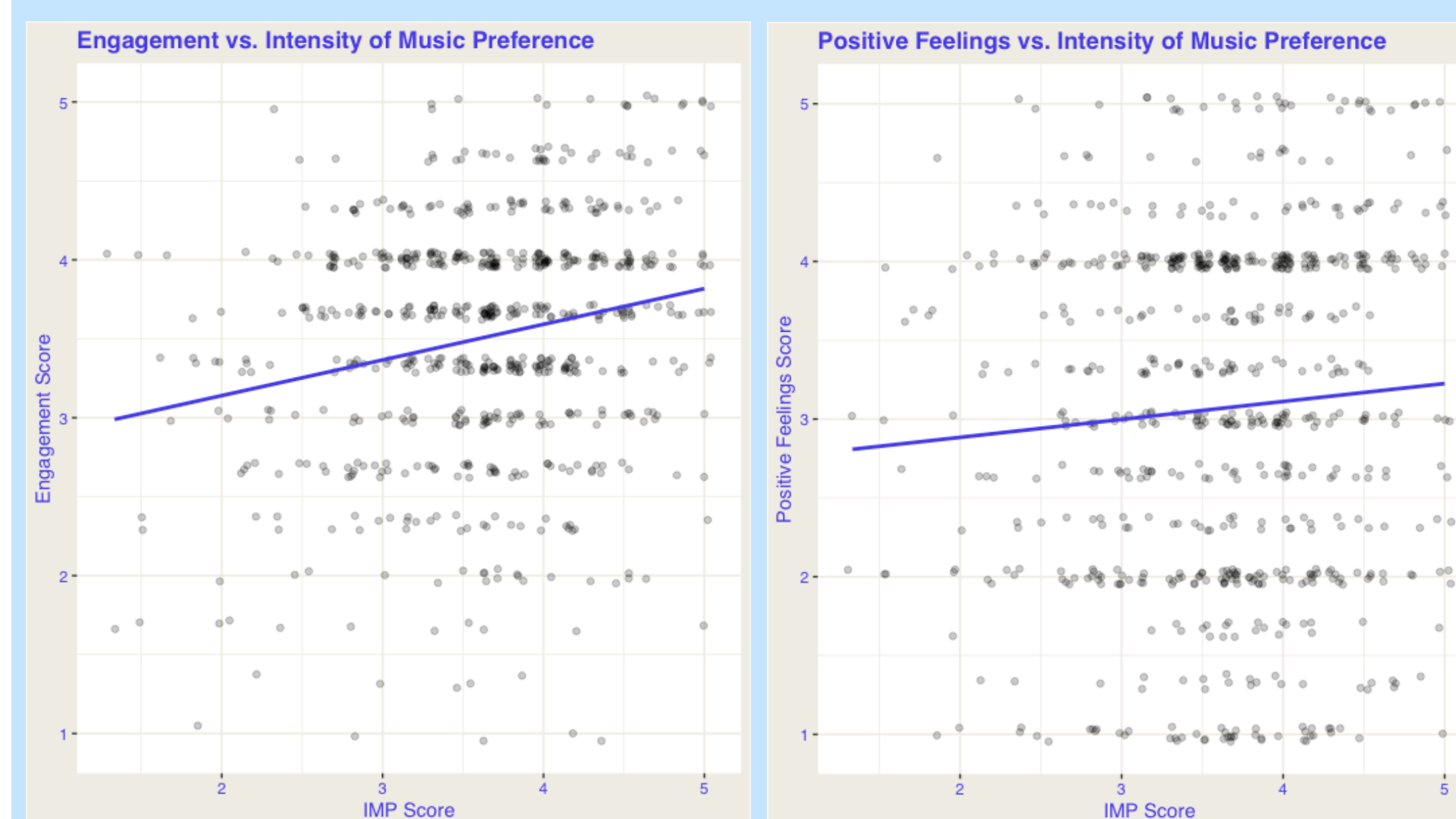
Training & Employment

- Measured musical training with job status, compared with flourishing measures
- Minimally notable positive relationship with **positive feelings**. No other significant corelations were found.

MUSIC TRAINING RESPONSE AVERAGES

Music Preference Intensity

- Looked at how much people like music (e.g. "I like music." "I couldn't live without music.")
- Positive association between higher music preference intensity and both **engagement** and **positive feelings**

- Higher IMP associated with significant increases in most flourishing categories for the **employed**

Types of Music Usage

- Music usage types included using it for **cognitive purposes**, **emotional purposes**, and **background purposes**
- Music used less for **emotional** purposes, more as **background** noise
- **Background** music positively associated with well-being outcomes

	Engagement	Meaning	Life Satisfaction	Positive Feeling	Negative Feeling
Cognitive	0.002255	0.101	0.42155	0.3776	0.0805
Emotional	0.000135	0.952	0.43847	0.407	0.3812
Background	0.088013	0.164	0.00698	0.0047	0.0000261

- Employment status associated with **background** music usage