



# A Passing Acquaintance's Impact: Interacting with Weak Ties affects Well-Being

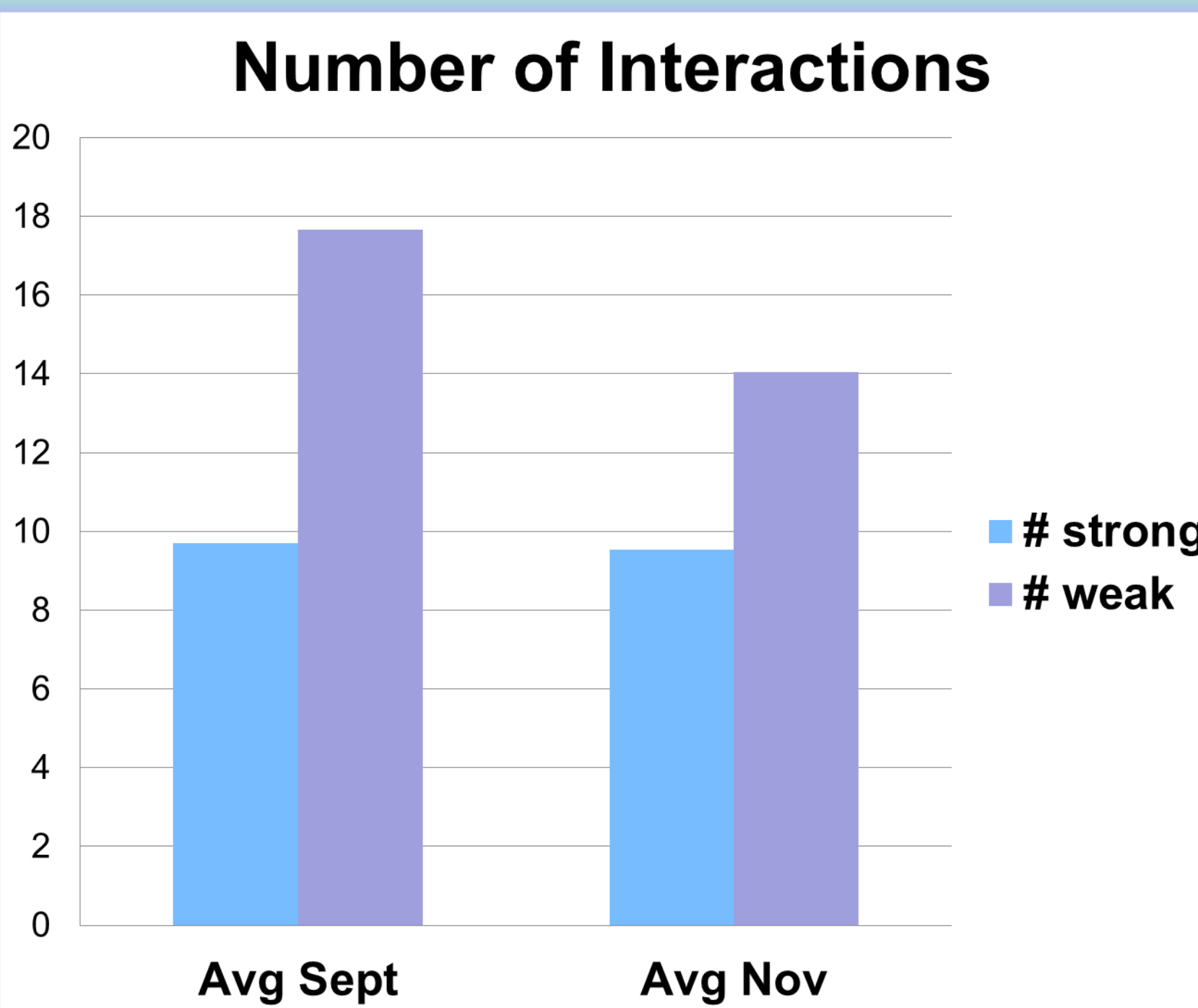
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## Introduction

Strong social bonds are pertinent to our happiness. However, little research has considered the role played by those whom we interact with more often, yet have less intimate relationships with.

In a typical day, we have more interactions with “weak ties” than “strong ties”. Do the number of such interactions result in increased well-being?

Strong ties are stable over time, but weak tie interactions are prone to increase or decrease based on other factors.



## Methods

**Participants:** First-year students, N = 60 (44 living on-campus, 14 living off-campus)

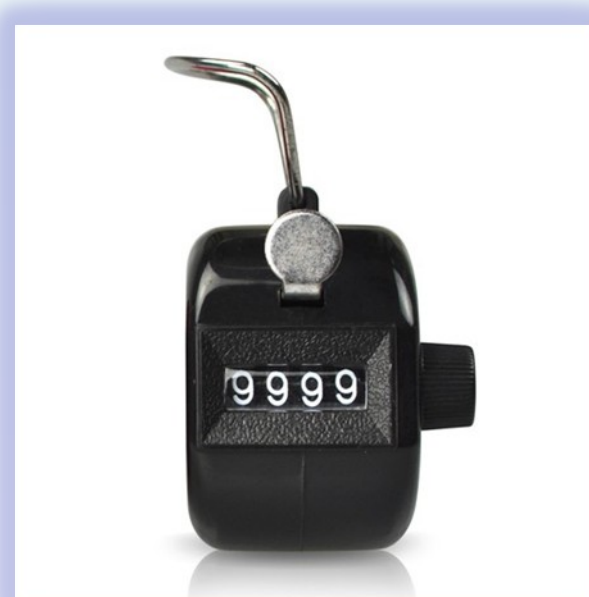
**Procedure:** Counted social interactions for 3 days in September and 3 days again in November; answered self-report questionnaires based on well-being

## Materials



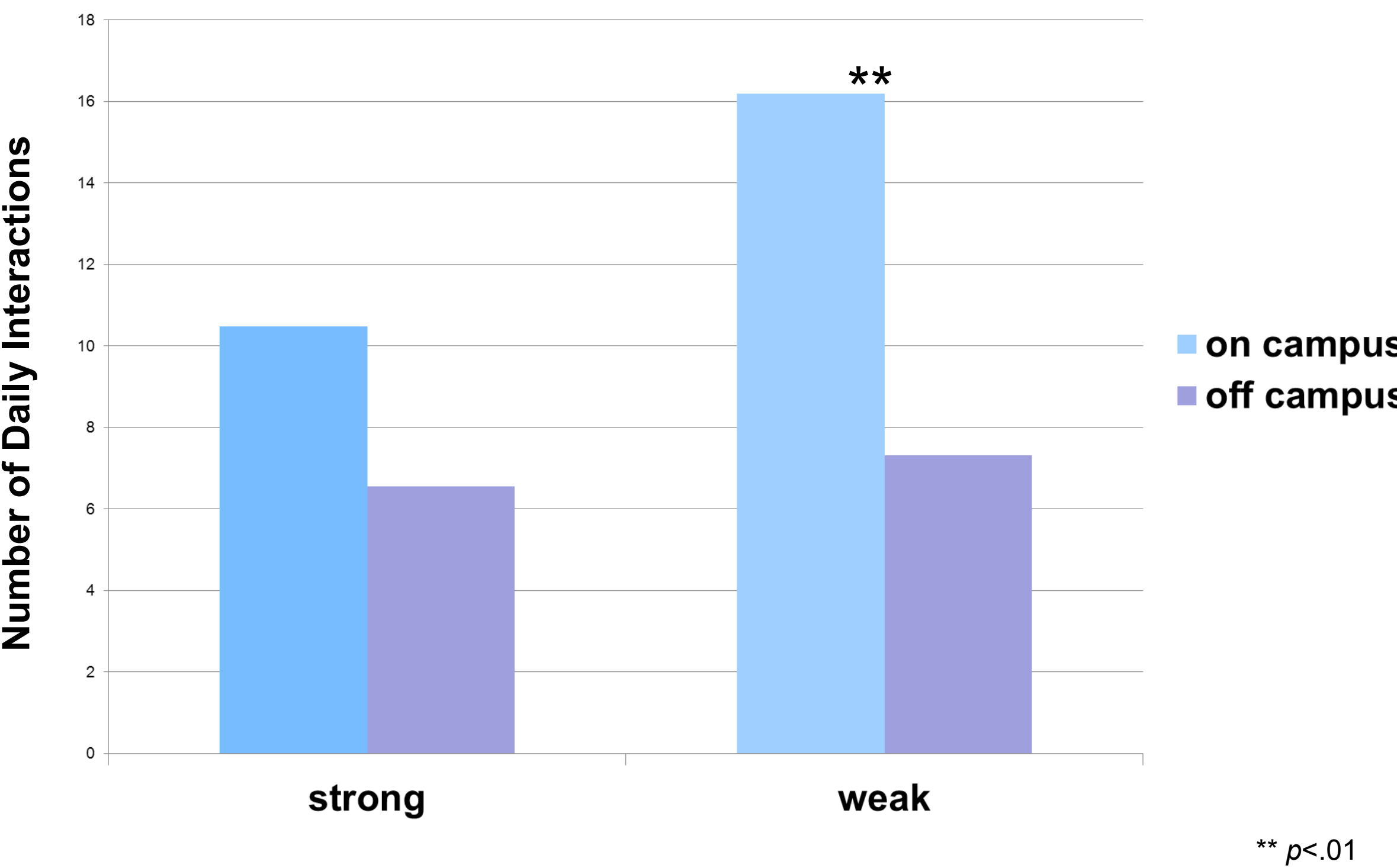
**Strong Ties:** close, know well, would confide in

**Weak Ties:** not close, don't know well, unlikely to confide in



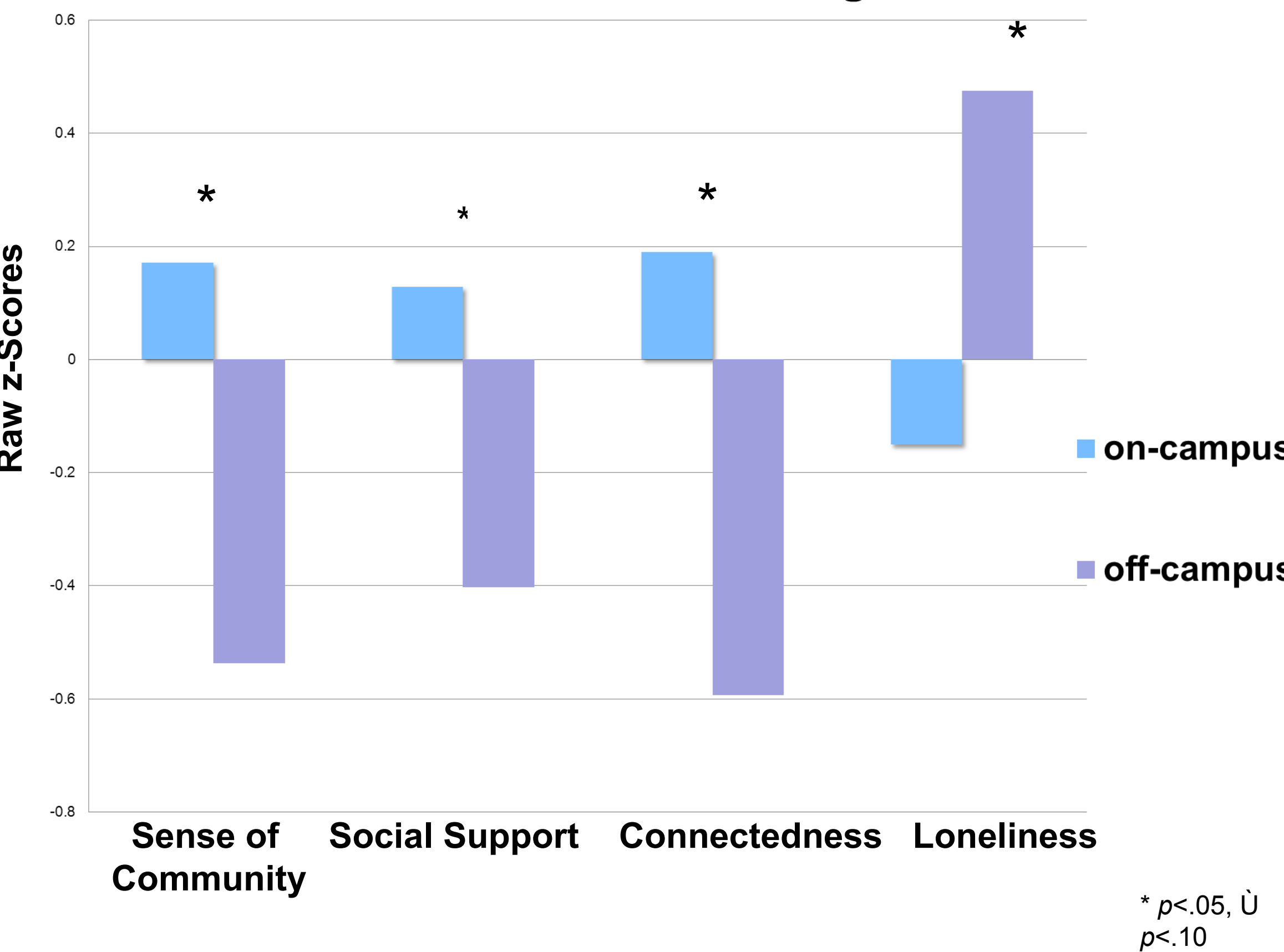
## Results – On vs. Off Campus

### Average Number of Interactions



Students who live on-campus have significantly more weak tie interactions, but no more strong tie interactions, than students who live off-campus.

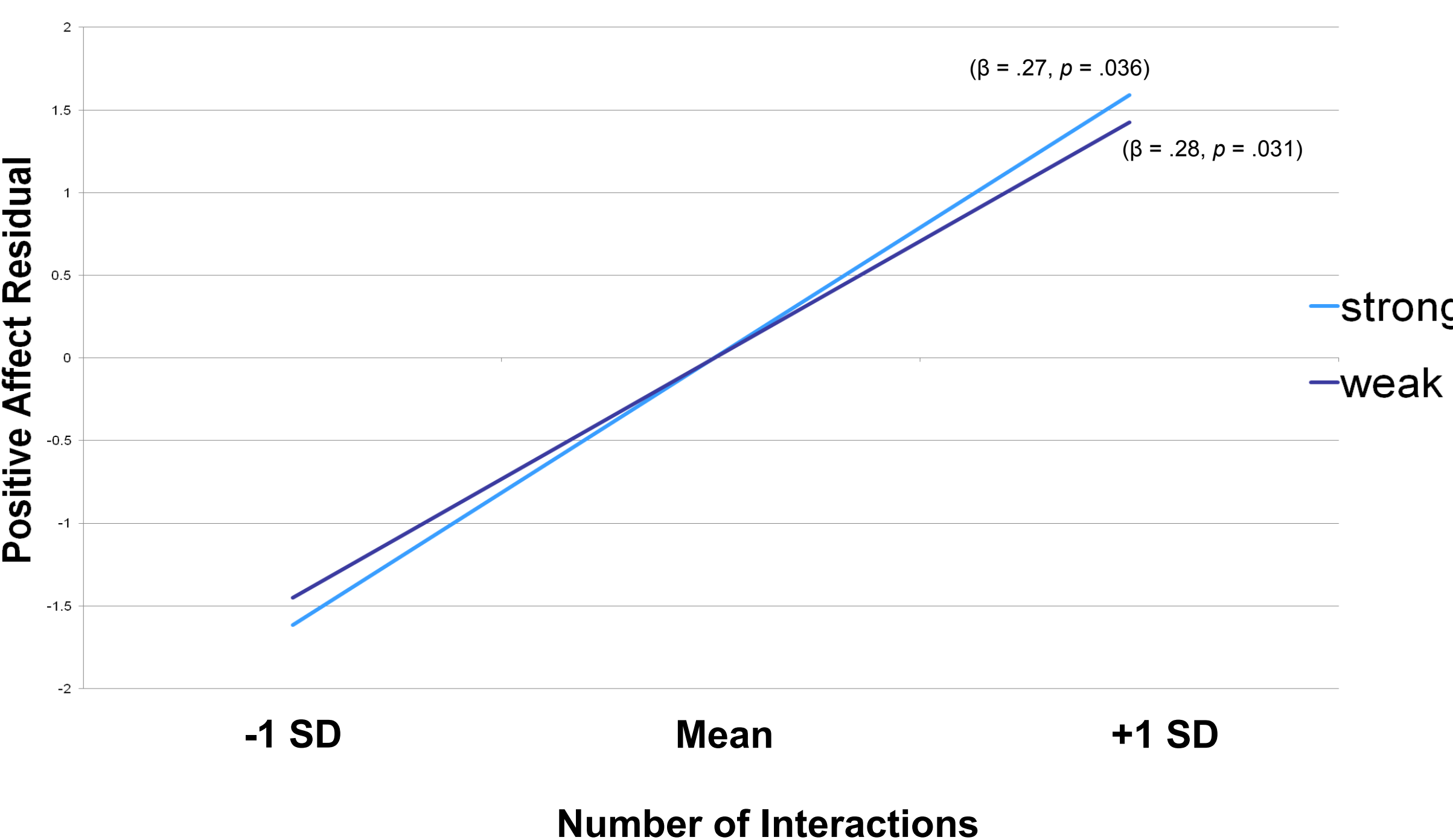
### Social Well-Being November Averages



Students who live on-campus have higher social well-being on several measures compared to students living off-campus.

## Results – Well-Being

### Predicting Well-Being from a change in the number interactions



Changes (i.e. residuals) in the amount of daily weak tie interactions predict the level of one's well-being or positive affect. The same pattern holds for levels of flourishing, a measure of life satisfaction. Also, marginally for a sense of community.

Changes in strong tie interactions are significantly correlated with more positive affect and less loneliness, however they are not associated with one's sense of community or with flourishing.

## Conclusions

**Did an increase in interactions with weak ties predict an increase in well-being?**

Students who interacted with more weak ties during the day experienced more positive affect. Those who lived on campus also felt a greater sense of community and social support, and felt less loneliness. This effect is likely a result of the many social networks more readily available for those students who live in residence.

## Implications and Next Steps

**Why do tie interactions drop in November?** We could research environmental influences and conditions such as midterms, flu season and weather patterns.

**Does the great difference in daily interactions for students on vs. off campus make a significant difference in overall life satisfaction?** For those who live off campus, how can UBC help foster a better sense of community? Future research should expand upon this study and explore how to increase one's weak ties. To achieve a balance of several strong relationships supplemented by many interactions with our acquaintances would lead to better overall well-being.