



2014

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# Beta-Testing of an Intervention Workbook to Promote Humility

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V i r g i n i a C o m m o n w e a l t h U n i v e r s i t y

## INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

- Humility is a virtue that minimizes the importance of the self in the interest of others. It has been associated with a host of benefits, including better self-rated physical health, better relationship quality, higher academic performance, higher patience and empathy, and higher ratings of job performance (Davis et al., 2013; Krause, 2010; Peters, Rowatt, & Johnson, 2011).
- Lavelock et al. (under review) tested a workbook intervention to promote humility, and in its inaugural efficacy study, this workbook promoted trait humility in its participants over and above alternative virtue workbooks, a positivity workbook, and a non-action control group.
- The present study seeks to replicate the results of Lavelock et al. (under review) with an updated version of the same humility workbook intervention
- We hypothesized that this 8-hour self-directed workbook would produce higher levels of trait humility than in positivity workbook or a non-action control condition.

## METHOD

- Participants: N = 72 undergraduate psychology students at VCU
  - Humility Group (n = 24), Positivity Group (n = 24), Controls (n = 24)
- Design: 3 condition x 2 time point; longitudinal, experimental design
- Dependent Measures:
  - Trait humility: Values in Action Strengths Inventory (VIA; Peterson & Seligman, 2004)
- Trait positivity and negativity: Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson et al., 2004)
- Independent Measures: 8-hour self-directed workbooks
  - Humility workbooks were given to the humility group to see if they increase humility
    - PROVE: Pick a time when you were not humble, Remember your abilities within the big picture, Open yourself, Value all things, and Examine limitations
  - Positivity workbooks were given to positivity group to see if they improved mood
  - HAPPY: Have a meaningful outlook, Apply your strengths, Put things in perspective, Paint a positive picture of your future, and Yes to others
- Assessment occasions occurred at pre-test and two-week follow-up

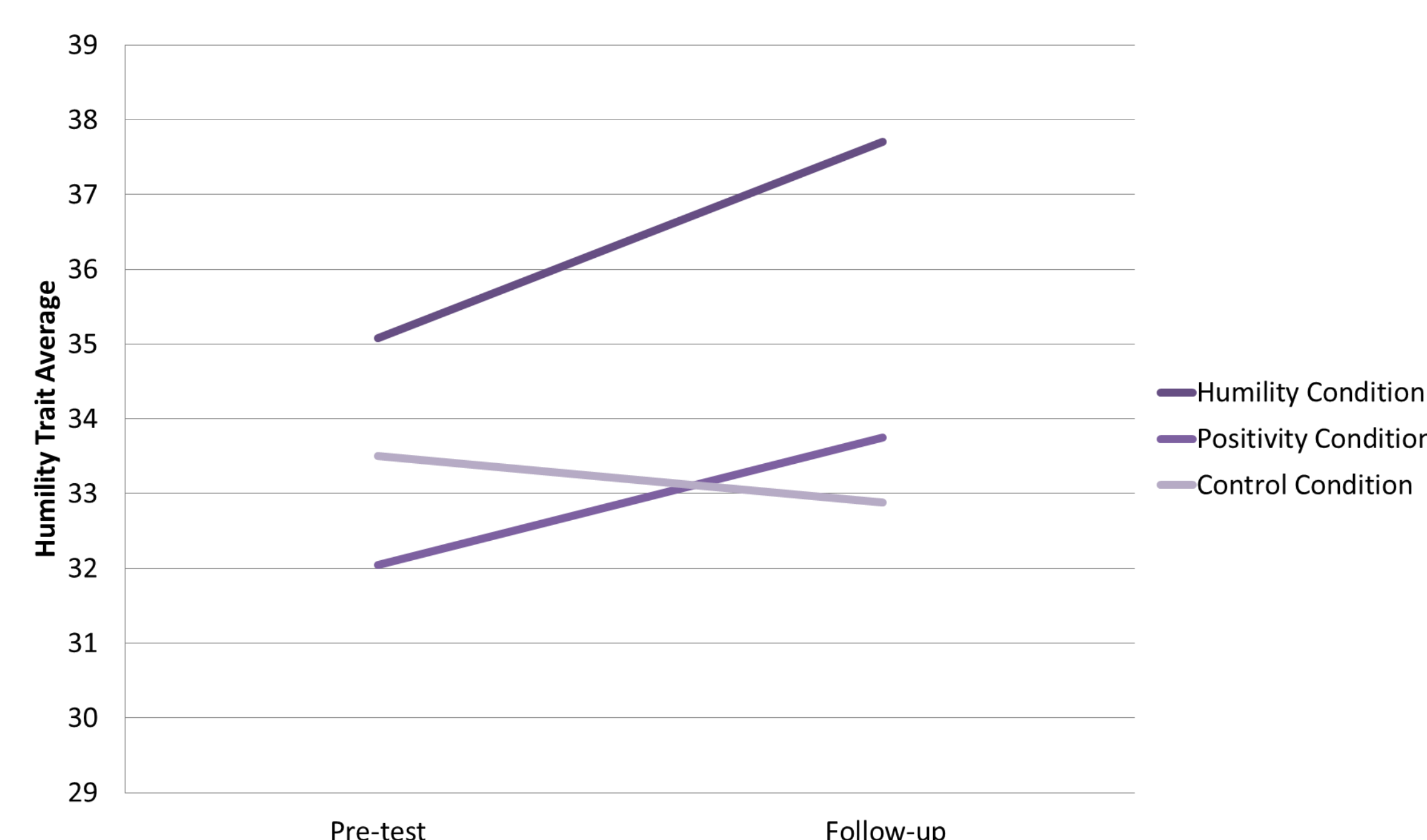
## PROCEDURE

- Step 1: Students signed up for the study using SONA and completed baseline dependent measures
- Step 2: Participants who were randomly assigned to complete a humility or positivity workbook were e-mailed their workbook and given two weeks to complete and return it electronically
  - Participants randomly assigned to the control condition were informed of their status and told they would receive a second set of measures in two weeks
- Step 4: After two weeks, participants in all three conditions completed follow-up dependent measures

## RESULTS

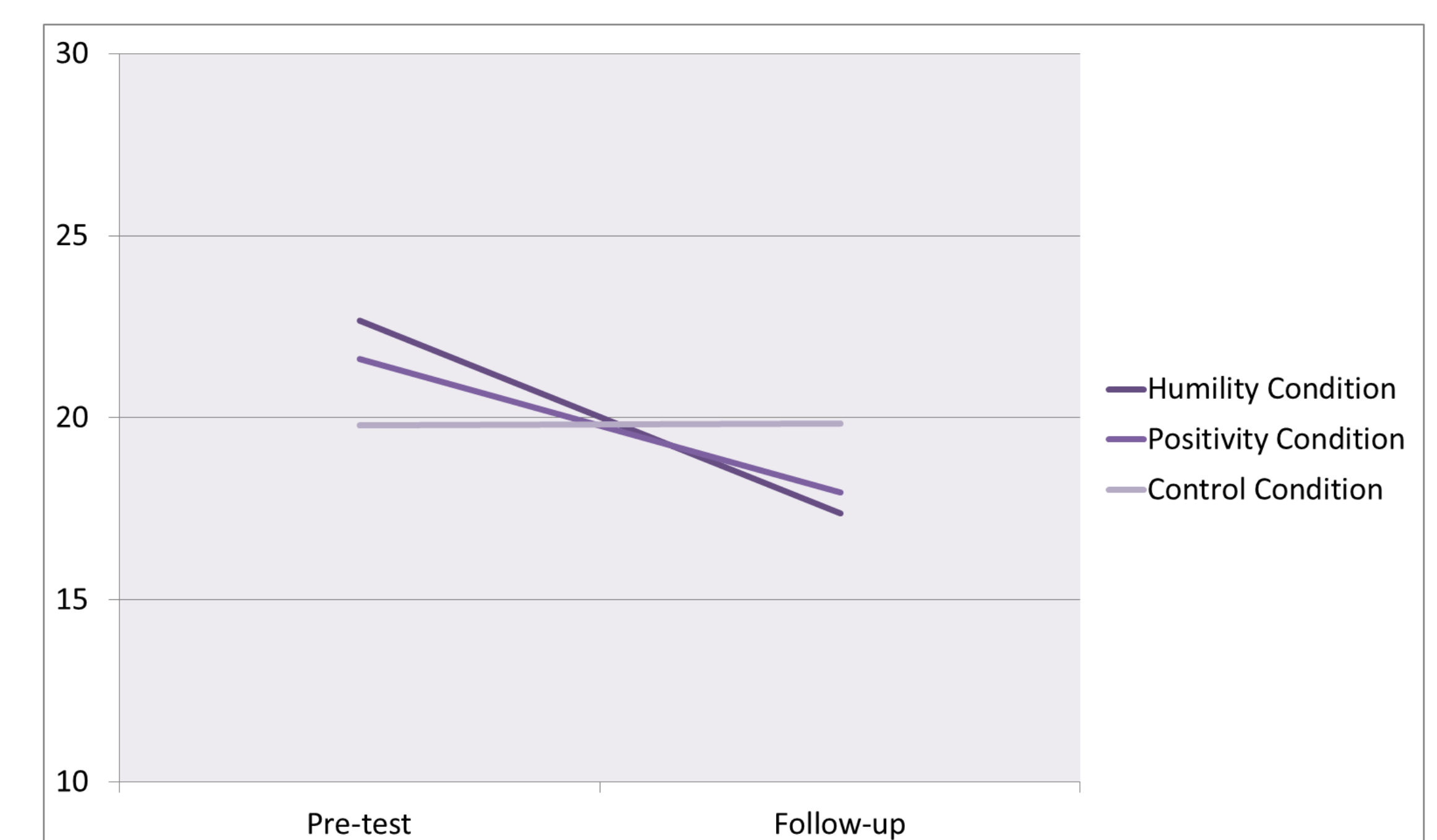
- Humility, positivity, and control pre-test scores were not significantly different at baseline
- Humility group: increased significantly in trait humility,  $t(23)=-2.59$ ,  $p=.051$ , and decreased in trait negativity,  $t(23) = 3.938$ ,  $p < .01$
- Positivity group: did not increase significantly in trait humility,  $t(23) = -1.830$ ,  $p = .080$ , and decreased in trait negativity,  $t(23)=2.534$ ,  $p = .019$
- Control group: did not change in trait humility,  $t(23) = .597$ ,  $p = .556$ , or in trait negativity,  $t(23) = -.043$ ,  $p = .966$

## TRAIT HUMILITY



Presented at the 2014 VCU Undergraduate Research Symposium  
Richmond, VA; April 23<sup>th</sup>, 2014

## TRAIT NEGATIVITY



## DISCUSSION

- We found that the humility workbook did indeed significantly increase trait humility and decreased trait negativity between pre-test and follow-up
- Participants in the positivity and non-action control condition participants did not improve in trait humility
- The positivity condition did decrease in trait negativity, showing that it was an appropriate manipulation that affects mood, but not necessarily virtue
- These data suggest that interventions to promote virtue seem to do so in addition to improving mood, perhaps as a byproduct, but that interventions to improve mood do not necessarily affect virtue, but do improve mood
- We conclude that this workbook intervention to promote humility appears efficacious in its beta-testing.

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