

Mood on the Willingness to Complete Jobs

Heather R. Hudgins & Jonathan E. Westfall

Delta State University

Research has shown that when peoples' moods were positively elevated, they show an increased level of activity. (Batson, Coke, Chard, Smith, and Taliaferro, 1979). This is also the case for employees in the workforce. Employees who are happy and satisfied with their employer are more productive and more likely to stay with that company (van der Vaart, Linde, and Cockeran, 2013). And by satisfying employee's needs and elevating employee's happiness, a more efficient work place is created (van Hooff and Geurts 2015). While employers typically understand the needs component, they may not always address mood. This study looks at whether a person's change in mood can affect the amount of work that they are willing to complete in one day. It is believed that a better mood will create employees who are more willing to take on more difficult tasks during the day.

Methods

Ninety-five participants were recruited on the campus of a rural public university in Mississippi. When participants arrived, they were taken into a quiet room and were given a seat and a pencil. Participants were then given informed consent forms to complete, and those were collected before the survey was given out. They were then given a survey that included three different questionnaires dealing with decision making, distributed at random. Each participant completed a survey that included either a positive mood manipulation (33.3%), a negative mood manipulation (36.1%), or no mood manipulation (30.56%). The participants were then given a series of work tasks that became increasingly more difficult and asked at which point they would stop agreeing to do the work. After the participant completed the survey, the participants were dismissed from the room. Twenty-three participants did not complete the mood manipulation and were excluded from analysis. Of remaining participants, 76% were female. Average participant age was 19.83 (SD = 5.19).

Discussion

Our findings indicate that men and women may perceive the same jobs different based upon the mood that they are in. Specifically, when put into a state of negative affect, men seem more likely to accept harder jobs for the same pay, whereas women tend to switch earlier when in a negative state. In positive affect, the situation shifts, in that women tend to switch later whereas men switch earlier. If replicated, this effect may shed light onto the subjective nature of job evaluation, and the ways in which temporary states (e.g., mood) may affect permanent situations (e.g., the job one chooses to accept).

It is vital, however, to replicate the effect, due to a number of limitations in this study. While we recruited our target sample size, almost a quarter decided not to participate in the mood manipulation exercise, which adversely affected our ability to draw conclusions. A larger sample size will be needed to verify that these were not spurious results. Other limitations include the scenario used (while our sample comes from a university that employs both male and female janitorial staff, the perception that cleaning is a female-dominated profession may have affected results), and the non-standard wording of the mood manipulation.

In this next portion of the survey, we're going to ask you about a moment in your past. This question is optional, however please consider answering it as openly and honestly as possible.

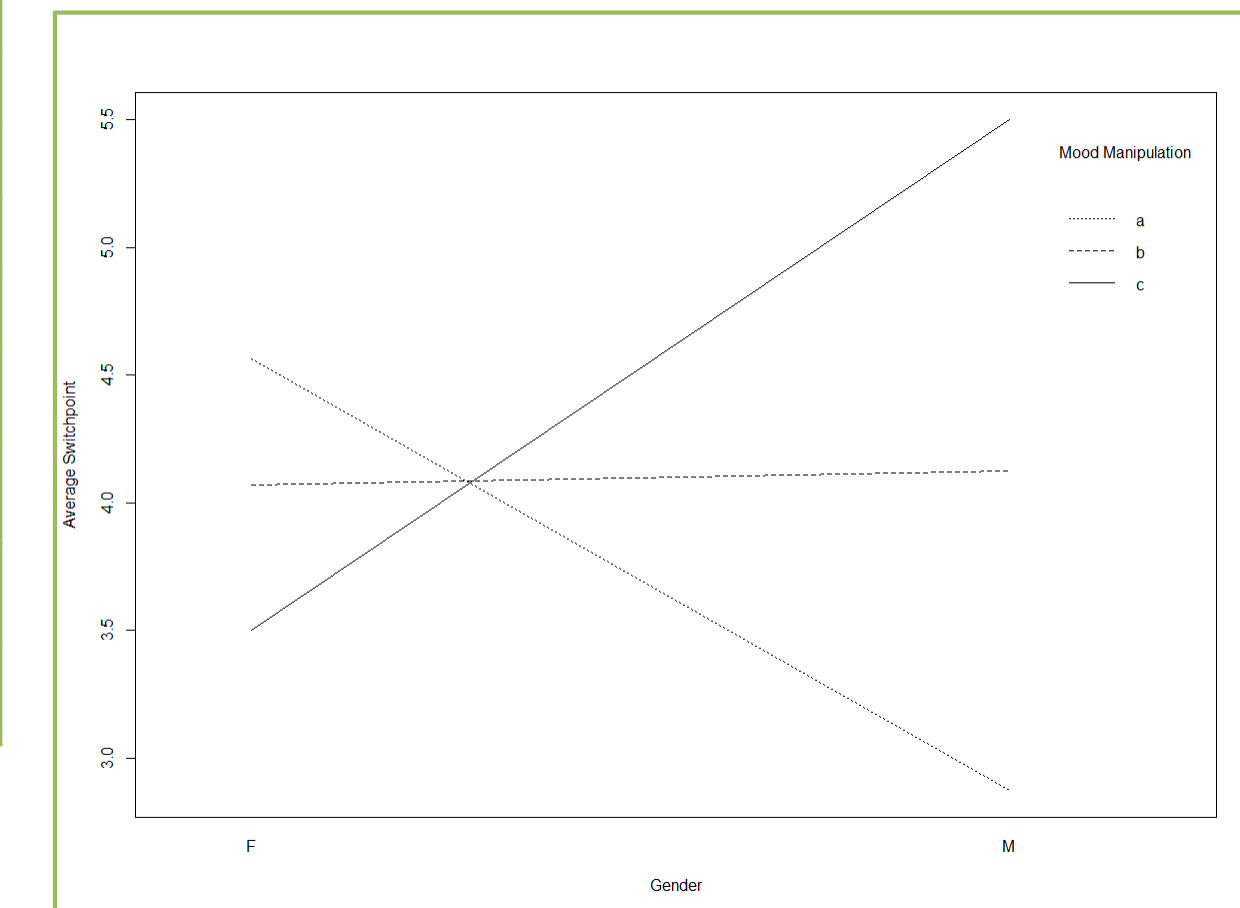
(A): Please think about the happiest moment of your life? What was it, and what was that experience like for you?

(B): Think about what you did last week? What did you do, and what was the week like for you?

(C): Please think about the worst moment of your life? What was it, and what was that experience like for you?

The following is a series of jobs. If you were looking for work, which of the following would you be willing to do, and which ones would you refuse to consider/accept? All of the jobs pay at the same rate, \$8.50 per hour.

Job Description	Yes, I'd accept this job	No, I would not accept this job
You are asked to clean 4 different classrooms in 5 hours. You are only asked to take out the trash, vacuum and clean the windows.		
You are asked to clean 6 different classrooms in 5 hours. You are only asked to take out the trash, vacuum and clean the windows.		
You are asked to clean 8 different classrooms in 5 hours. You are only asked to take out the trash, vacuum and clean the windows.		
You are asked to clean 12 different classrooms in 5 hours. You are only asked to take out the trash, vacuum and clean the windows.		
You are asked to clean 15 different classrooms in 5 hours. You are only asked to take out the trash, vacuum and clean the windows.		
You are asked to clean 15 different classrooms in 5 hours. You are asked to take out the trash, vacuum, and clean the interior and exterior windows.		
You are asked to clean 15 different classrooms in 5 hours. You are asked to take out the trash, vacuum, clean the interior and exterior windows, and clean the white boards in the room.		
You are asked to clean 15 different classrooms in 5 hours. You are asked to take out the trash, vacuum, clean the interior and exterior windows, clean the white boards in the room, and clean all the desks in the room.		
You are asked to clean 20 different classrooms in 5 hours. You are asked to take out the trash, vacuum, clean the interior and exterior windows, clean the white boards in the room, and clean all the desks in the room.		
You are asked to clean 25 different classrooms in 5 hours. You are asked to take out the trash, vacuum, clean the interior and exterior windows, clean the white boards in the room, and clean all the desks in the room.		



Results

On the job tasks, most participants switched between the third and fourth job ($M=3.96$, $SD=2.11$). However there was no significant difference between mood conditions ($F(1,69) = 0.119$, $p > .05$). When controlling for gender, a significant interaction was found ($F(2,66)=3.29$, $p < .05$) such that men switched later in the negative mood condition, while women tended to switch earlier. A marginally significant main effect of gender was observed ($F(1,66)=3.52$, $p = .066$).

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Delta State Decision Sciences Lab

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Contact Information:
Jonathan E. Westfall, PhD
Division of Counselor Education & Psychology
jwestfall@deltastate.edu