Does self-enhancement affect spending behavior? An experimental analysis

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.udayton.edu/stander_posters

Recommended Citation

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Stander Symposium at eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Stander Symposium Posters by an authorized administrator of eCommons. For more information, please contact frice1@udayton.edu, mschlangen1@udayton.edu.
Does Self-Enhancement Affect Spending Behavior: An Experimental Analysis

Mark A. Matthews, Faculty Advisor: Erin M. O’Mara, Ph.D.
The University of Dayton

Spending Behavior: Willingness to spend money has been shown to be associated with positive affect and self-esteem.

- **Positive Affect** – Experiencing more positive feelings is associated with more spending (Arnolds & Reynolds, 2009).
- **Self-Esteem** – Higher self-esteem is associated with less spending (Yurchisin et al., 2008).

**Self-Enhancement** is the motivation to maintain or bolster one’s self-esteem (Brown, Collins, & Schmidt, 1988).

- **Well-Being** – Self-enhancing may lead to potential benefits for well-being, one’s general psychological health and happiness (O’Mara et al., 2012).

### Background

**Spending Behavior:** Willingness to spend money has been shown to be associated with positive affect and self-esteem.

- **Positive Affect** – Experiencing more positive feelings is associated with more spending (Arnolds & Reynolds, 2009).
- **Self-Esteem** – Higher self-esteem is associated with less spending (Yurchisin et al., 2008).

**Self-Enhancement** is the motivation to maintain or bolster one’s self-esteem (Brown, Collins, & Schmidt, 1988).

- **Well-Being** – Self-enhancing may lead to potential benefits for well-being, one’s general psychological health and happiness (O’Mara et al., 2012).

### The Present Study

To examine the effects of self-enhancement on spending behavior and subsequent well-being.

**Hypotheses:**
(a) Self-enhancing will be associated with spending less money compared to inducing positive affect and a control condition.
(b) Both self-enhancing and the positive affect condition will be associated with higher well-being compared to the control condition.

**Participants**
One-hundred and fifty undergraduate students will complete this study in exchange for course credit. The study will be administered online through SurveyMonkey.

### Design

- **Self-Enhancement Condition** (N = 50)
- **Positive Affect Condition** (N = 50)
- **Control Condition** (N = 50)

**Experimental Conditions**

**Self-Enhancement**: Participants will be asked to think about their most valued character trait and to write about how they exhibit this trait more than others (O’Mara et al., 2012).

**Positive Affect**: Participants will be asked to think about a positive life event and to reconstruct how that event came to be (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003).

**Control**: Participants will directly move on to the other dependent variables.

### Measures

**Positive and Negative Affective Schedule** (Watson et al., 1988): ½ pre and ½ post

**Rosenberg Self-esteem** (Rosenberg, 1965) ½ pre and ½ post

**Amount Spent in shopping task**

**Shopping Motivation Questionnaire** (Kim, 2006)

**Well-Being Composite**
- **Subjective Well-Being Scale** (Sevastos et al., 1992)
- **Perceived Stress Scale** (Cohen et al., 1983)
- **Satisfaction With Life Scale** (Pavot & Diener, 1993)
- **Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale** (Radloff, 1977)

**Demographics:** Gender, Age, and Race

### Shopping Task

The shopping task asks participants to pretend that they have $25 to shop for a gift for a family member from the UD Bookstore. Participants will be asked to pretend that they are truly shopping for a gift and that they can choose to purchase items for themselves as well (example items below).

### Acknowledgements

This work has been supported in part by the University of Dayton Office for Graduate Academic Affairs through the Graduate Student Summer Fellowship Program.

For more information, contact Matthewsm6@udayton.edu