



Revisiting the restorative effects of positive mood: An expectancy-based approach to self-control restoration



Patrick M. Egan^{a,*}, Joshua J. Clarkson^b, Edward R. Hirt^a

^a Indiana University, USA

^b University of Cincinnati, USA

HIGHLIGHTS

- Examined how expectancies affect the relationship between mood and self-control.
- Found association between positive mood and expectancies of mental restoration.
- Found idiosyncratic expectancies mediate the effect of mood on perceived depletion.
- Manipulated expectancies moderated mood's conventional influence on self-control.
- Expectancies of mental energy change are central in mood's self-control influence.

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 21 April 2014

Revised 25 August 2014

Available online 6 December 2014

Keywords:

Mood

Expectation

Recovery

Depletion

Self-control

Perception

ABSTRACT

The present research explored the empirical relation between positive mood and self-control restoration. In line with recent work on the perceptual correlates of self-control exertion, we tested whether positive mood's restorative effects could be partly attributable to expectancies of mental energy change. Results showed that positive mood elicited a general expectancy of mental energy restoration and that negative mood elicited a general expectancy of mental energy depletion. Furthermore, these expectancies were shown to alter perceptual and cognitive state in manners predictive of downstream self-control performance. Together, these results compliment emerging work on the importance of perceptual processes in the modulation of self-control performance, and warrant future work on the role of expectancies and subjective fatigue in self-regulatory pursuits.

© 2014 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Introduction

Positive mood is a topic that has received extensive social–psychological inquiry over the past several decades. As a highly ubiquitous (Diener, Sandvik, & Pavot, 1991), desirable (Inglehart, 1990), and malleable (e.g., Tamir & Robinson, 2007) psychological construct, researchers have taken a keen interest in uncovering the consequences associated with positive moods (Fredrickson, 2001; Isen, 2000; Labroo & Patrick, 2009; Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005). This interest has yielded several intriguing conclusions, with elevated moods promoting enhanced creativity (Hirt, Devers, & McCrea, 2008; Isen, 1987), heightened integration of information (Schwarz & Clore, 1996), improved health outcomes (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005), and decreased stress (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000). Of interest to the present work,

however, are the consequences of positive mood for self-control restoration (Tice, Baumeister, Shmueli, & Muraven, 2007).

Mood and self-control

In a seminal paper on self-control restoration, Tice et al. (2007) demonstrated that positive mood inductions can eliminate the onset of mental depletion when interspersed between two consecutive self-control tasks. In particular, Tice and colleagues had individuals engage in an initial self-control depletion task before completing one of several different positive mood inductions (e.g., watching a comedy video). After the mood induction, participants were asked to engage in a task that required some level of self-control exertion (e.g., handgrip performance). Results indicated that positive mood removed the aversive consequences typically associated with extended self-control exertion, such that depleted individuals induced with a positive (versus neutral or negative) mood demonstrated higher self-control performance on a subsequent task; performance that was equivalent to non-depleted individuals. Thus, it would appear that positive mood can “restore”

* Corresponding author at: Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences, Indiana University, 1101 E. 10th Street, Bloomington, IN 47405, USA.
E-mail address: pmegan@indiana.edu (P.M. Egan).

self-control ability back to baseline levels in a rapid and efficient manner (see also Fredrickson, Mancuso, Branigan, & Tugade, 2000; Fry, 1975; Leith & Baumeister, 1996).

The most apparent question stemming from this work is *how* positive mood elicits these restorative effects. One possibility offered from Tice et al. (2007) is that positive mood increases stores of physiological energy available to the individual, thus heightening the availability of these energy stores for subsequent tasks. Indeed, some theorists argue that self-control relies upon a particular set of physiological resources that are depleted with extended use (see Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven, & Tice, 1998; Baumeister, Muraven, & Tice, 2000; Baumeister & Tierney, 2011; Muraven, Tice, & Baumeister, 1998), and can be recovered through physiological intervention (Baumeister, Vohs, & Tice, 2007; Gailliot et al., 2007; Gailliot & Baumeister, 2007; Gailliot, Peruche, Plant, & Baumeister, 2009; Masicampo & Baumeister, 2008). It follows that if positive mood can evoke heightened physiological arousal (Fredrickson, 2001; Thayer, 1989), mood-induced self-control restoration could provide a veridical “refueling” of physiological resources (see also Tice, Bratslavsky, & Baumeister, 2001).

The present work seeks to explore an alternative explanation for mood-induced self-control restoration grounded in primarily psychological, rather than physiological, processes. That is, even if positive mood affects physiological energy stores in manners predictive of self-control success, it is unlikely that these physiological processes operate in isolation from related psychological processes. Consistent with this reasoning, increasing evidence suggests that motivational (Molden et al., 2012; Muraven & Slessareva, 2003), cognitive (Carter, McCullough, & Carver, 2012; Schmeichel & Vohs, 2009), and perceptual (Clarkson, Hirt, Jia, & Alexander, 2010; Muraven, Gagné, & Rosman, 2008) mechanisms can underlie self-control change in the absence of presumed physiological change. Among these mechanisms, the current paper examines whether positive mood's restorative influence is partially attributable to *expectancies of mental energy restoration*. Specifically, we reasoned that: (1) positive mood may be associated with stronger expectancies of mental energy restoration than is negative mood; (2) these expectations may explain the restorative effects of positive mood and the non-restorative effects of negative mood; and (3) altering these expectancies may facilitate restorative effects from negative mood and non-restorative effects from positive mood.

Mood, expectancies, and behavior

If mood modulates self-control via the operation of expectancies, we would anticipate that positive and negative mood should diverge in terms of energy-relevant expectancies, particularly those that implicate mental energy change. Partial support for this proposition comes from work on expectancies of transient change regarding mood (Clare & Ortony, 1991; Cunningham, 1988; Goldman, Kraemer, & Salovey, 1996; Rimé, Philippot, & Cisamolo, 1990; Shaver, Schwartz, Kirson, & O'Connor, 1987). This work shows that individuals hold relatively consensual expectancies about the energetic implications of particular mood states, such that positive mood states elicit stronger expectancies of energy restoration (e.g., energetic, active) and weaker expectancies of energy depletion (e.g., tired, rundown) in comparison to negative mood states (Cunningham, 1988; Shaver et al., 1987). The initial aim of the present work is to explore whether these polarized expectancies about mood's energetic influence apply to the domain of mental energy specifically. In particular, we test the possibility that positive and negative mood states are associated with divergent expectations of mental energy change, with positive mood activating stronger expectancies of mental restoration and negative mood activating stronger expectancies of mental exhaustion.

Assuming that different mood states activate divergent expectancies of mental energy change, it follows that these expectancies can facilitate

divergent behavioral outcomes. Numerous examples of expectancy effects have been observed within the medical and human physiology literatures, such that expectations consistently guide the physiological and behavioral changes associated with a given treatment condition (Colloca & Benedetti, 2005; Finnis, Kaptchuk, Miller, & Benedetti, 2010; Meissner et al., 2011; Morton, El-Dereby, Watson, & Jones, 2010; Stewart-Williams & Podd, 2004). For instance, restorative expectancies concerning a particular medical treatment predict analgesic responses rivaling direct physiological intervention (Aslaksen & Flaten, 2008; Morton et al., 2010). Furthermore, these types of expectancy effects are obtained in myriad domains, ranging from sleep recovery (Draganich & Erdal, 2014) to cardiovascular improvement (Crum & Langer, 2007; Stoate, Wulf, & Lewthwaite, 2012) to pain alleviation (Kam-Hansen et al., 2014) to hunger satiation (Crum, Corbin, Brownell, & Salovey, 2011). Given such far-reaching influences, researchers have begun identifying the operation of expectancies in self-control exertion (Job, Dweck, & Walton, 2010; Job, Walton, Bernecker, & Dweck, 2013; Martijn, Tenbult, Merckelbach, Dreezens, & de Vries, 2002; Vohs, Baumeister, & Schmeichel, 2012). As but one example, individuals who expect willpower to decrease rapidly over time show greater susceptibility to self-control depletion than do individuals who expect willpower to remain stable and/or increase over time (Job et al., 2010; Martijn et al., 2002).

Taken together, the work reviewed thus far suggests that positive and negative mood states are associated with divergent expectancies of energy change, and that expectancies of energy change influence behavioral outcomes inside and outside the domain of self-control. The present work seeks to apply these findings to the phenomenon of mood-induced self-control restoration by examining whether mood is associated with divergent expectancies of mental energy change, and whether such expectancies influence the emergence of improved self-control behavior following an experimental mood induction.

From expectancies to self-control

In addition to exploring *if* expectancies impact mood-induced self-control restoration, the present work also explores *how* such expectancies might exert this impact. Based on previous work, we anticipate perceptual mechanisms to play a key mediating role in the association between expectancies and self-control performance. Research within the medical domain suggests that expectancies influence treatment outcomes through the operation of perceptual changes (e.g., decreased pain, increased optimism; Meissner et al., 2011). These perceptual changes not only reinforce the benefits of active treatments (Aslaksen & Flaten, 2008); they also mobilize other processes that emerge irrespective of treatment condition (Crum & Langer, 2007). These general findings converge with recent work suggesting that changes in perceived mental depletion (i.e., the extent to which individuals feel less able to focus or concentrate at a given moment) underlie the influence of expectancies within self-control contexts. Using informational manipulations concerning the perceived source (Clarkson et al., 2010; Clarkson, Hirt, Chapman, & Jia, 2011) or malleability (Job et al., 2010) of mental energy fluctuation, researchers have shown that expectancy information indirectly modulates self-control exertion through corresponding changes in perceived mental depletion. For instance, Clarkson et al. (2010) found that task feedback following self-control exertion led to divergences in perceived mental depletion, and these perceptual changes explained the feedback's behavioral influence in a manner that was independent of prior self-control exertion (see also Muraven et al., 2008).

Based upon these findings, we hypothesized that expectancies of mental energy change concerning mood could catalyze expectancy-congruent changes in perceived mental depletion. That is, the association of positive mood to mental energy restoration and negative mood to mental energy exhaustion should lead these mood states to

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/947790>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/947790>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)