



Enhancing the Influence of Distal Primes on Creativity: The Role of Contextual and Personal Variables – Study 1

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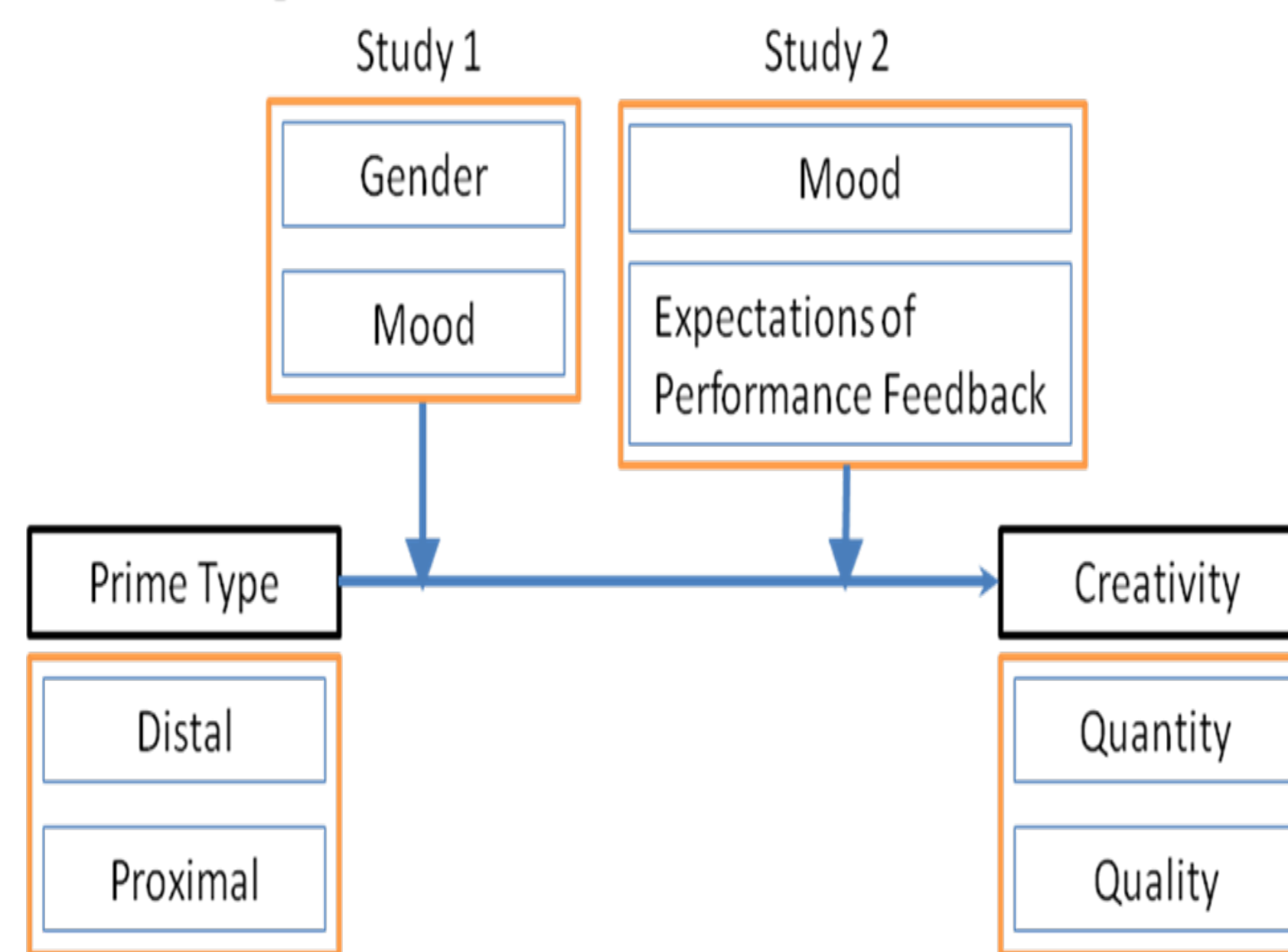
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Abstract

Environmental primes promote both the quantity and quality of consumer creativity. More importantly, primes interact with mood and gender. Study 1 revealed an interaction between prime type and mood where distal primes enhanced the quantity but not the quality of creative solutions for those in a negative mood. Additionally, there was a gender and mood interaction.

Conceptual Framework



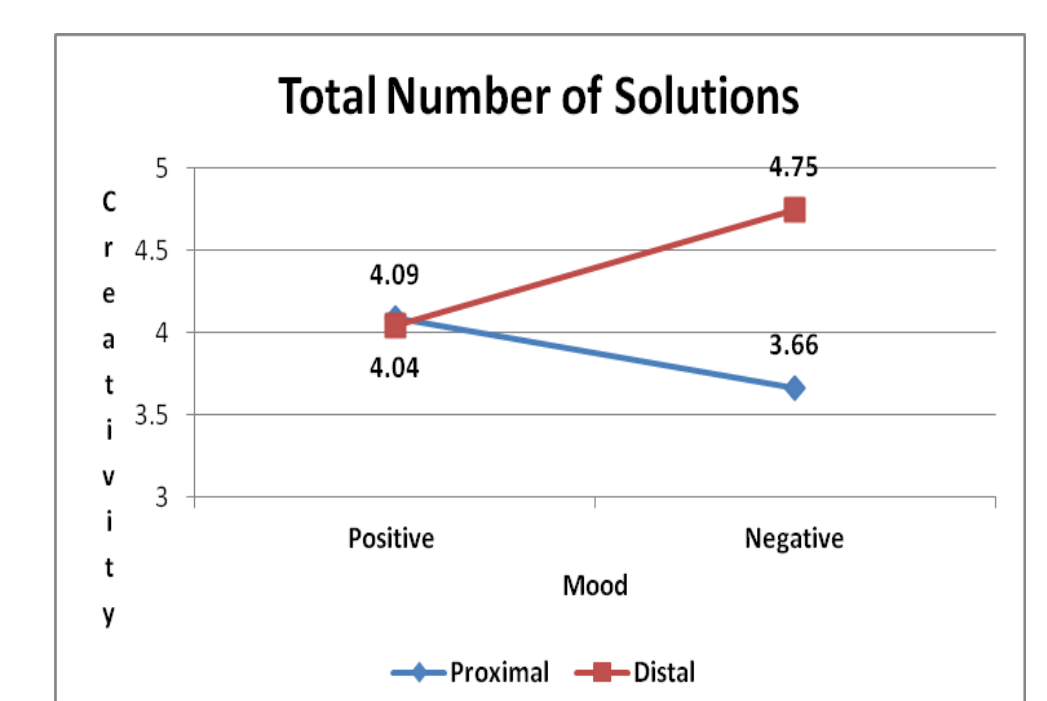
Hypotheses

PRIME TYPE

H1a&b: Compared to proximal primes, exposure to distal primes will result in a greater *quantity and quality* in terms of (i) total number of solutions, and (ii) total number of creative solutions.

MOOD

H2a: In the negative mood condition, distal primes compared to proximal primes will generate greater *quantity* of creativity in terms of (i) total number of solutions and (ii) total number of creative solutions. H2b: H2a will not happen for quality.



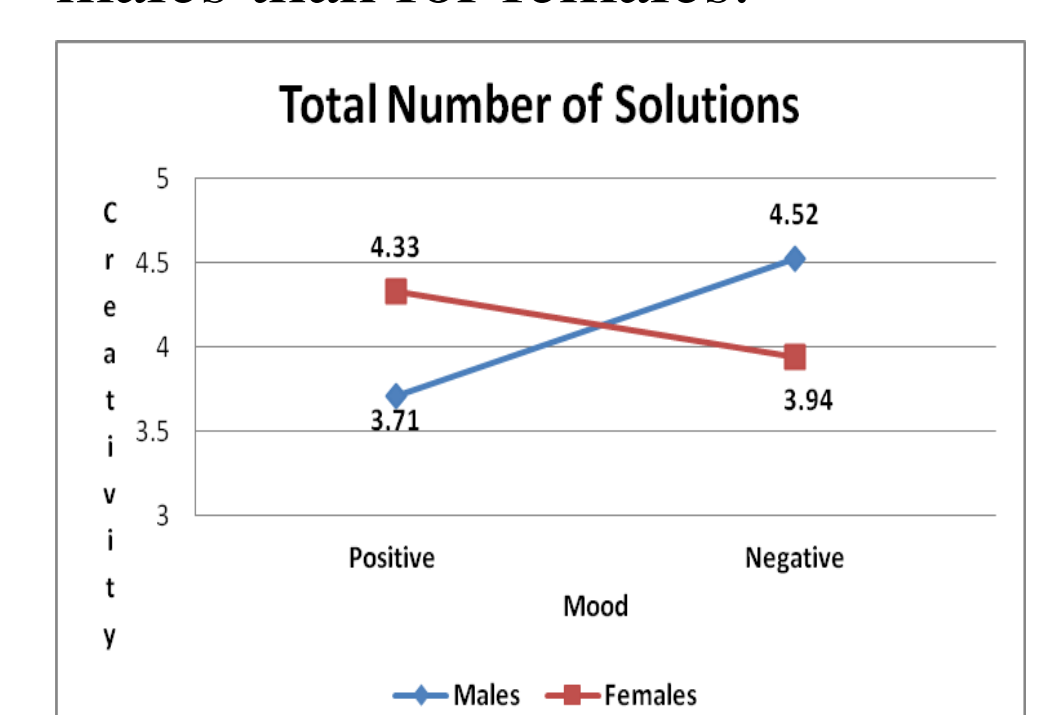
MOOD and GENDER

H3a: Positive moods will elicit greater quantity of creative output in terms of (i) total number of solutions and (ii) total number of creative solutions for females than for males.

H3b: Positive moods will elicit greater quality of creative output in terms of (i) novel solutions and (ii) appropriate solutions for females than for males.

H4a: Negative moods will elicit greater quantity of creative output in terms of (i) total number of solutions and (ii) total number of creative solutions for males than for females.

H4b: Negative moods will elicit greater quality of creative output in terms of (i) novel solutions and (ii) appropriate solutions for males than for females.



Background

Creativity, defined as the construction of something novel and useful (Amabile 1983; Sternberg and O’Hara 1999), is valued by various constituencies. The marketing and advertising communities recognize the value of creativity with awards including the Frost & Sullivan Product Innovation of the Year Award and the advertising Addy’s, Clios, and Effies. However, creativity is not limited to giant conglomerates or to entrepreneurs but is practiced by individual consumers trying to tackle practical problems (Fillis and McAuley 2000; Guilford 1950). By applying innovations in everyday problem solving, consumers have contributed by helping marketers create new products, discover new uses to old products and modify old products to remain relevant to the changing times.

Procedure

A 2 (prime type: proximal or distal) × 2 (mood: positive or negative) × 2 (gender: male or female) between-subjects experiment was conducted. 150 participants from a major university subject pool were randomly assigned to one of eight study conditions. They were each informed that they would complete three different and unrelated tasks regarding their reactions to different scenarios. For the first task, participants were told that they would watch a movie clip and provide general responses to the clip. They were shown a four-minute long film clip from either ‘Sophie’s Choice’ (negative mood condition) or from ‘Jungle Book’ (positive mood condition). After they viewed the clip, they answered general questions about their perceptions of the movie clip and the mood manipulation check question (Coefficient alpha = .90). The second task included the prime type manipulation that was placed in the context of a word search puzzle. Each puzzle was a 10 x 10 matrix of squares, and each square contained a letter for this “word find” task. Embedded in the matrix was a list of 3 words; two priming words (based on a pretest described next) and one neutral filler word (flower-girl). Words appeared with letters in a straight line either from left to right or from right to left. The participants were asked to circle the words that they found in the puzzle. Aside from the ‘word’ manipulations, the puzzles were invariant. Following the exposure to primes, the participants were given their third task, which included a consumption-related problem similar to that used by Burroughs and Mick (2004). In this scenario, each respondent was asked to imagine that he/she were to attend a dinner hosted by his/her firm. The essence of the problem is that the study participant was getting ready for the event dinner when he/she realized that his/her shoe was scuffed and he/she was out of polish. A photo of the scuffed shoe was shown along with the description of the situation to heighten the scenario. The participants were asked to write down how they would respond to the problem. Next, they were asked to recall the prime words they had previously identified in the word search puzzle from the second task and complete the demand effect and covariate questions

Research Objectives

1. To investigate the factors that moderate the influence of distal primes on creativity: mood and gender as individual variables.
2. To consider creativity in terms of both quantity and quality.