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Feeling Sad? Adjust your posture

Zach Fricke
Ouachita Baptist University

Hannah Shull
Ouachita Baptist University

Jennifer Fayard
Ouachita Baptist University

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Feeling sad? Adjust your posture

Zach Fricke, Hannah Shull, and Jennifer Fayard, Ph.D.
Ouachita Baptist University

Background

- Confidence and emotions are present in everyday life. They affect the way one communicates with others and feels about themselves.
- How can a person feel and portray a greater sense of self-confidence?
- Posture can influence confidence and affect both positively and negatively (Welker, 2013).
- An open, upright posture promotes good thoughts and feelings of power (Briñol, 2009).
- When confronted with a stressor, sitting in a more rigid, upright posture helps people to deal with stress (Nair, 2014).
- When one individual praises another, it changes the thought process of the praised individual (Freidenburg, 1977).
- Saying positive or negative words has the ability to instantly change a person's posture. (Oosterwiik, 2009).
- People who think positively will sustain their positive thoughts longer if they are in an upright posture (Petty 1983).
- Research question: Do posture and word stimulus affect mood and confidence?
- We hypothesized that body posture and word stimulus would positively affect self-esteem and affect.

Method

- Participants were 73 undergraduate students from a Southern Baptist university in Arkansas.
- The materials used were the 60 item PANAS-X, measuring traits of affect, and the 10 item Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, measuring self-esteem.
- The study was a 2 (positive/neutral posture) x 2 (positive/neutral stimulus) factorial design. Participants were randomly assigned to each condition using a random number generator.
- Participants were run individually and sat in a specified posture (upright or relaxed) and repeated word stimulus according to their assigned group.
 - Positive stimulus: happy, kind, joyful, peace, victory
 - Neutral stimulus: sheep, stick, log, frog, lizard
- Participants filled out the measures and were given a debriefing form.

Results

- We did not reach significance in the following areas:
 - Positive affect
 - Negative affect
 - Self-esteem (according to Rosenberg scale)The range of the F statistic was .10 to 3.02.

- There was a main effect for positive stimulus on joviality, $F(1,69)=4.63, p<.05$. There was not an interaction or a main effect for positive or neutral posture on joviality.
- There was a main effect for positive stimulus on self assurance $F(1,69)= 4.83, p<.05$. There was not an interaction or main effect for positive or neutral posture on self assurance.
- There was a main effect for positive stimulus on surprise $F(1,69)=6.66, p<.05$. There was not an interaction or main effect for positive or neutral posture on surprise.

- There was a main effect for positive posture on attentiveness $F(1,69)=6.03, p<.05$. There was not a interaction or main effect for stimulus on attentiveness.

Conclusions

- We predicted we would find a relationship between posture and word stimulus on positive affect and confidence, however we did not find significance for every facet. Based on other research, we believe that with more participants, we would have seen an effect or interaction of posture and word stimulus on positive affect and self confidence.
- We did find that the positive word stimulus led to participants feeling more jovial, which is a core facet of positive affect. Also, participants felt more self-assured and surprised. While these are not specifically large components of positive affect, these traits are related.
- We also found that positive posture made participants feel more attentive. This is an important finding, because posture effects many areas of life such as performing, communicating, and learning.
- Future studies should include more participants to increase the power of the results and have participants stay in the posture longer to ensure a stronger effect.
- Some participants vocalized having trouble repeating the word stimulus phrases, so another method of priming the participants should be used. Perhaps one that requires each participant to read a positive or neutral passage to themselves would be better and allow for more than one participant to be run at a time.

