The Effects of Anxiety and Sadness on Travelers' Decisions and Perceived Risk: Mood Management As an Active Process of Affect-Adjustment

Wen-Bin Chiou, National Kaohsiung Hospitality College, ROC (Taiwan)
Chin-Sheng Wan, National Kaohsiung Hospitality College, ROC (Taiwan)

Recent studies have shown that anxiety motivates individuals to prefer low risk tasks and to be risk-aversive, whereas sad motivates individuals to prefer high reward tasks and to be risk-seeking. The first experiment demonstrated that anxiety and sadness impact travelers’ decisions and perceived risk in a significantly different way. A further experiment revealed that the effects of anxiety and sadness on travel preferences and perceived risk were only pronounced when travelers made decisions for themselves and expected they would be affected by the outcomes. The results indicated that travelers’ mood management is like an active affect-adjustment process.

[to cite]:

[url]:
http://www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/12963/volumes/ap07/AP-07

[copyright notice]:
This work is copyrighted by The Association for Consumer Research. For permission to copy or use this work in whole or in part, please contact the Copyright Clearance Center at http://www.copyright.com.
INTRODUCTION

Recent studies have shown that anxiety motivates individuals to prefer low risk tasks and to be risk averse, whereas sadness motivates individuals to prefer high reward tasks and to be risk seeking. The first experiment demonstrated that anxiety and sadness impact travelers’ decisions and perceived risk in a significantly different way. A further experiment revealed that the effects of anxiety and sadness on travel preferences and perceived risk were only pronounced when travelers made decisions for themselves and expected they would be affected by the outcomes. The results indicated that travelers’ mood management is like an active affect-adjustment process.

Extant studies on the influence of affective states on decision processes have found that different affects or moods (even for the same negative moods) are likely to exert sharply different impacts on individuals’ decision making (e.g., Pham 1998; Pham, Cohen, Pracejus, and Hughes 2001; Raghunathan and Pham 1999). In spite of common wisdom, many important decisions are made under emotionally taxing conditions. As for travel or leisure, vacations are a popular means of people adapting themselves or relaxing their moods. Travel or leisure have been shown to play an important role for psychological health and adjustment, and has been shown to be one of the frequent strategies for people to cope with stress (Orsega-Smith, Mowen, Payne, and Godbey 2004; Payne 2002). Therefore, it is important to explore how affective states affect travelers’ decision making, particularly for the negative affects.

According to the affect-as-information perspective (Schwarz 1990; Schwarz and Clore 1996), people often rely on emotional information while making decisions because affects are likely to be considered as valuable information for their judgment. Two negative affects—anxiety and sadness—are focused as target affects because they are among the most widespread forms of emotional distress (Bryant and Zillman 1984; Levi 1967). In this research, the hypotheses about travelers’ mood management were derived from recent developments on the informative value of affective states (e.g., Pham 1998; Yi and Baumgartner 2004) combined with an analysis of the cognitive determinants of affect (Lazarus 1991; Roseman, Spindel and Jose 1990). These hypotheses were examined by contrasting travelers’ decisions and perceived risk under anxiety versus under sadness.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

Negative Affect as Information and Affect to Be Adjusted

One primary function of affect is to provide information that may activate different implicit goals (e.g., Lazarus 1991; Schwarz 1990). For example, people with anxious moods tend to prefer low-risk jobs while individuals with sad moods prefer high reward ones (Raghunathan and Pham 1999). In one study (Gallagher and Clore 1985), angry and fearful participants were asked to make judgments about the blame-worthiness of a person and about the likelihood of negative life events. While angry participants reported a higher assessment of blame and lower assessment of risk, fearful participants reported the reverse. Therefore, these studies uncovered distinct judgmental biases even though the targets were completely unrelated to the affect-inducing stimulus.

According to the affect-as-information perspective (Schwarz 1990; Schwarz and Clore 1996), people with negative affects will proactively tend to adopt some strategic actions or decisions in order to amend or change the state of negative moods. This perspective also means that mood management is likely to become an objective in decision making, and then influence the preference of choice alternatives (Schwarz and Clore 1988). In other words, the relative preference of choice alternatives may be affected by individuals’ existing affective states (Martin, Abend, Sédikides and Green 1997; Pham 1998). Moreover, negative affective states may influence decisions by shaping decision makers’ motives. A pervasive motivational shift observed under negative affect is a heightened concern for elevating or repairing one’s mood (e.g., Morris and Reilly 1987; Zillmann 1988). Thus, the main thesis in this research is that affective states such as anxiety and sadness will have distinct influences on decision making because people experiencing them will draw different interferences from their affective experiences. As a result, they will activate different implicit goals for making decisions or judgments.

Travelers’ Mood Management under Anxiety and Sadness

The meaning structure underlying anxiety is defined by high uncertainty over an outcome and low control over a situation (e.g., Frijda, Kuipers, and ter Shure 1989). Anxiety is generally experienced in response to situations where the person is uncertain about an impending outcome of a personally relevant event, especially when the outcome is potentially harmful, and feels unable to alter the course of events. Thus, individuals who are experiencing anxiety are likely to interpret their feelings as signaling high uncertainty and lack of control (Schwarz 1990). As a result, anxious individuals are likely to bring an implicit goal of uncertainty reduction and risk avoidance to the decision-making task.

In contrast, the distinct meaning structure underlying sadness is the loss or absence of a reward according to the appraisal theorists (Lazarus 1991; Roseman 1991). Sadness-related emotions are primarily experienced in response to the loss of absence of a cherished object or person (Ortony, Clore, and Collins 1988). As a result, whenever individuals experience feelings of sadness, they should be inclined to interpret these feelings as meaning that “something (rewarding) is missing.” Therefore, it was predicted that sad individuals should be motivated by an implicit goal of reward acquisition or substitution (see Forgas 1991 for similar reasoning). This prediction is consistent with a common tendency among consumers to buy gifts for themselves when they are feeling depressed.
When considering the differential impacts of anxiety and sadness on travel decisions, travelers primarily consider travel type, which is highly related to anxiety and sadness. Group/package tours and individual budget travel are the two main kinds of travel types when choosing a travel package (e.g., Hsu and Hsieh 2004; Prideaux 2002). Examining the determinants of travelers’ preferences towards group/package tours or individual travel and their perceived risk could provide insights for leisure psychology as well as mood management in health psychology. Generally speaking, group/package tours is a travel type with a highly planned schedule and offers professional tour guides and tour leaders. Thus, travelers neither pay much attention to schedule arrangement nor worry too much about unexpected incidents that may ruin their interests and raise their sense of uncertainty about travel schedule. Uncertainty and uncontrollable risk in group/package tours are less worrying than they are in individual travel. As a result, group/package tours should be more attractive for individuals with anxious moods rather than for individuals with sad moods.

On the other hand, individual travel usually appeals to a sense of personal achievement and it is challenging to arrange the travel schedule individually. This characteristic may serve as the potentiality of reward acquisition or substitution. Individual travel seems to accompany with it more uncertain factors and higher risk than group/package tours do. However, individuals with a sadness affect are less sensitive to risk compared to anxious individuals (Raghunathan and Pham 1999). Therefore, travelers with sad moods may have higher preferences for individual travel than group/package tours.

Risk evaluation plays an important role on travelers’ evaluating of choice alternatives (Dowling and Staelin 1994; Weber and Milliman 1997). Since anxious individuals are motivated to have an implicit goal of risk avoidance, they should be more sensitive to travel risk than sad individuals. Therefore, perceived travel risk should be different under these two negative affective states. The hypotheses are as follows:

H1: When other conditions in the travel choice packages are equivalent, group/package tours should be more attractive for travelers with an anxious affect rather than for those with a sad affect, whereas individual travel is more attractive for travelers with sad moods rather than for those with anxious moods.

H2: Travelers with an anxious affect will be more sensitive to travel risk than travelers with a sad affect. Specifically, anxious travelers will exhibit higher perceived risk than sad travelers.

The Nature of Mood Management for Negative Affects

Based on the notion of negative affects to be repaired, mood management should be an important mechanism underlying travelers’ making decisions and judgments about travel risk. Another main object in this research, however, was to examine more closely the underlying process. Two types of processes would be consistent with the explanation that anxiety and sadness prime different goals in decision making. One explanation is a generalised motivational shift. Over time, people may have learned to attend to sources of uncertainty when experiencing anxiety and to attend to sources of reward when experiencing sadness. In other words, they seek uncertainty reduction when experiencing anxiety and a pursuit of personal achievement for reward when experiencing sadness. Because these tendencies are learned over numerous experiences, these motivational shifts would presumably be passive rather than active or strategic.

Alternatively, anxiety and sadness may bias decisions through an active process of affect adjustment. Anxious and sad individuals may actively assess the feeling of implications of their options by asking themselves, “What would I feel better about?” (see Martin et al. 1997, for a related idea). Given that different goals are presumably salient among anxious and sad people, the options would have different feeling implications in making decisions and judgments. An option that minimised (increased) uncertainty would feel better (worse) if the traveler were anxious, whereas an option that has high (low) reward potential would feel better (worse) if the traveler were sad.

The predictions were as follows. If anxiety and sadness bias travel preferences and risk perceptions by prompting a generalised motivational shift, the bias should not depend on whether individuals would be affected by the outcome of their decisions. If, on the other hand, anxiety and sadness bias decision making and risk perceptions because individuals actively monitor the feelings associated with their decisions, the magnitude of this bias should depend on whether they expect to experience the consequences of their decision. The effects of anxiety versus sadness on travel decisions and risk perceptions should be more prominent when they (and their feelings) can be influenced by the outcome of their decisions than when they cannot be affected (see Manucia, Baumann, and Cialdini 1984 for a similar reasoning).

H3: The impacts of anxiety and sadness on travelers’ preferences for group/package tours or individual travel should be more pronounced in making decisions for themselves (the self decision condition) than for someone else (the agent decision condition).

PRETEST

This research primarily focused on examining the differential impacts of anxiety and sadness on travel preferences and perceived risk. The first necessary step was to be able to manipulate these two negative affective states independently. The emotional-event recollections technique used by Leith and Baumesiter (1996) was adapted. This made participants recall emotional events which had a significant impact on their lives and re-experience anxiety or sadness affects vigorously.

Participants and Design

Participants were randomly assigned to one of three emotional-events recollection conditions (anxiety, sadness, or neutral) with block-random method in groups of three. Fifty-one college students who completed the pretest for course credit participated in this study with a between-subjects design.

Procedure

Each session consisted of three participants arranged in independent compartments. The emotional-events recollection procedure was disguised by a self reflection study for the real purpose. Participants were informed that the major purpose of research was “to explore the
relationship between self reflection and decision-making.” Before starting to recall past emotional events, participants received a booklet describing self reflection as the “ability to re-experience individuals’ past events with significant meaning.” To increase involvement in this task, participants were further told that “people with better self reflection are found to be better parents, lovers, couples and managers, and that they tend to learn lessons from experiences which make them capable of not making the same mistakes.”

Next, each participant was presented with the instructions for one of three affect manipulation conditions. For the conditions of anxiety or sadness, participants were asked to recall the most salient and impressive events that made them feel a strong sense of anxiety or sadness. Instructions were designed according to the semi-structured and directed recollection procedure that is used commonly to investigate autobiographical memories (e.g., Bruhn 1990; Singer and Salovey 1993). In the neutral-affect condition, participants read a series of commonplace events in a day in the life of a person named Sean.

Finally, participants were required to “evaluate carefully the affective states at the moment” and “express accurately your feelings right now.” This section of the questionnaire was mainly focused on a subjective assessment of affective states and intended to verify the effectiveness of the emotional-events recollection procedure. Participants were presented with a scale consisting of six items, each phrased on the form “I am feeling [affective term],” and were asked to rate how well each item described their feelings on a seven point scale where 1 stood for “Describes my current feelings very well” and 7 stood for “Does not describe my current feelings at all.” The affective items covered the same numbers of valence of emotions and were selected from established scales (e.g., Mechnarian and Russell 1974; Watson, Clark, and Tellegan 1988).

Results and Discussion

The felt anxiety and sadness scores (see table 1) were submitted to a 2 (type of affective score) x 3 (affect manipulation) mixed ANOVA, treating the type of affective score (felt anxiety and sadness) as a repeated factor, and the affect manipulation (anxiety, sadness, or neutral) as a between-subjects factor. The analysis indicated that a two-way interaction was significant ($F(2, 48) = 21.29, p < .01$), and this indicated that different types of affect manipulation could induce the different types of felt affect.

Further, the felt anxiety in the anxiety scenario condition should be significantly higher than those in the sadness and in the neutral conditions, while the felt sadness in the sadness scenario condition should be significantly higher than those in the anxiety and neutral conditions. In terms of felt sadness, follow-up contrasts showed that felt sadness in the sadness condition ($M = 4.71$) was significantly higher than in the other two conditions ($M_{\text{anxiety}} = 2.93$ and $M_{\text{neutral}} = 2.53$), and $t(22.07) = 3.57$ and $t(30.30) = 3.79$ for the two contrasts respectively (two $p's < .01$). In terms of felt anxiety, follow-up contrasts for felt anxiety indicated that felt anxiety in the anxiety condition ($M = 5.24$) was significantly higher than in the other two conditions ($M_{\text{sadness}} = 2.94$ and $M_{\text{neutral}} = 1.88$), and $t(22.12) = 4.66$ and $t(25.38) = 2.61$ for these contrasts respectively (two $p's < .05$). The manipulation was thus successful in inducing distinct affective states of anxiety, sadness, or neutral mood across conditions.

| TABLE 1 |
| MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF AFFECTIVE TYPE OF SCORE BY AFFECT MANIPULATION |
| Affective score | Induced sadness | Affect manipulation | Induced anxiety | Neutral mood |
| Sadness | $M$ | $SD$ | $M^{a}$ | $SD^{b}$ | $M$ | $SD$ |
| Anxiety | 2.94 | 0.83 | 2.53 | 1.46 |
| Relaxation | 1.64 | 1.13 | 2.15 | 0.99 |
| Fear | 1.97 | 1.24 | 1.82 | 1.51 |
| Anger | 1.79 | 1.19 | 1.97 | 1.04 |
| Note: $n = 17$ participants in each of the affect manipulation condition, felt affects were rated on a 1-point scale. Numbers with different superscripts in a given row were significant at $p < .01$. |

Finally, additional analyses showed that the manipulation did not influence the ratings of other affective states. There were no significant differences in other felt affective states between the anxiety and the sadness conditions: $t(32) = -1.37$ for relaxation, $t(32) = -0.68$ for pleasure, $t(32) = 0.31$ for fear, and $t(32) = -0.46$ for anger respectively (all $p's > .05$).

**EXPERIMENT 1**

This experiment aimed to verify hypotheses, which specify the effects of anxiety and sadness on travel preferences and travelers’ perceived risk. After the affect manipulation (anxiety, sadness, and neutrality), participants were asked to assess the relative preferences of the choice set (travel type: individual travel vs. group/package tours), to select one of them, and to evaluate the travel risk of one hypothetical travel destination.

**Participants and Design**

There were 102 college students who participated in
this experiment to receive course credit. Target affects were manipulated between-subjects (anxiety, sadness, or neutrality) and participants were randomly assigned to each of the affect manipulation conditions.

Procedure

The emotional-events recollection procedure was identical to that followed in the pretest. Under the guise of a self reflection study, participants were asked to read the instructions designed to induce the target affects.

Unlike the pretest, participants’ affective states were not measured because previous studies have shown that such manipulation checks can reduce the impact of the manipulated affective states on judgments (e.g., Gorn, Goldberg, and Basu 1993; Keltner, Ellsworth, and Edwards 1993). Instead, participants were asked to complete a “Traveler Decision Making Questionnaire” in which they were presented with a choice set about travel types, and a travel-risk assessment task served as the measurement of the dependent variable. Next, participants were asked to rate their willingness to travel to the destination in the travel-risk assessment task on a nine-point scale. Further, the items from Li et al. (2004) were used to measure affiliation motivation, e.g., “I feel like I have really accomplished something valuable when I am able to get close to someone.” Participants were asked to rate their affiliation motivation on a five-point scale from “totally disagree” to “totally agree.” This measurement was aimed at controlling the attractiveness of interpersonal interaction between group/package tours and individual travel.

Dependent Variables

Travel preferences. The “Traveler Decision Making Questionnaire” incorporated a choice set (travel type) and a travel-risk assessment task. Two promotional ads were displayed on desktop computers simultaneously. Except for the different appeals of the choice alternatives, the region, expense, and duration of the two advertisements were the same. These two ads were juxtaposed on the screen and the position error was controlled by counter-balanced method. Thus, half of the participants witnessed Package A to the left and Package B to the right, while the other half witnessed Package B to the right and Package A to the left. The highlight of Package A (group/package tours) was “a well-planned schedule with professional tour guide and tour leader” and “no worries about schedule arrangement and a low risk for burdensome incidents,” whereas Package B (individual travel) was “a flexible schedule tailored individually” and “an opportunity for personal achievement and challenge.”

Travel preferences were measured by two kinds of indexes: “relative preferences” and “choice probabilities.” Relative preferences were measured on a non-graded scale with two end points: “I find A is more attractive than B” and “I find B is more attractive than A.” Participants’ responses were later quantified by measuring the distance between the lower end of the scale and the mark and were then standardised on a 100-point scale. So 1 signified “strong preference for A” and 100 signified “strong preference for B.” In terms of participants’ preferences for travel type, the higher the preference score, the stronger the preference for group/package tours (Package A). Additionally, with regard to “choice probabilities,” the participants were asked to indicate which of the two travel packages (travel type) they would choose if they had to join.

Perceived risk. A travel-risk assessment task was presented with a review report for a travel destination which was selected based on the official data from World Tourism Organisation. The travel-risk level of this travel destination was moderate and was displayed by the code name of the destination in order to avoid the confounding of participants’ prior preferences towards this area. The travel risk information of the destination included “possibility of terrorism,” “traffic accident,” “hospitality for tourists,” “robbery and pilferage rate,” and “local epidemic evaluation.” After reading the travel-risk information clearly, participants were asked to rate the travel risk on a nine-point scale from “least risky” to “very risky.” The lower the scores, the lower the perceived risk was. Besides, a preliminary pretest (n = 97) had shown that the subjective mean rating (M = 5.33, SD = 1.93) of risk assessment was not significantly different from the midpoint (µ = 5) of a nine-point scale (t(96) = 1.66, ns.). The result indicated that the travel risk of the destination we employed was at a moderate level.

Results and Discussion

Before testing the hypotheses, the possible confounding from the differences of affiliation motivation in the three affect groups should be examined. The result of an ANOVA indicated that the affiliation motivation across groups was not different (F(2, 99) = 1.95, ns.). Thus, participants’ affiliation motivation could not explain the differences of travel preferences in subsequent analysis. Data from experiment 1 is shown in table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLES</th>
<th>ANXIETY</th>
<th>NEUTRAL</th>
<th>SADNESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>74.17</td>
<td>53.18</td>
<td>36.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>28.20</td>
<td>30.68</td>
<td>26.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice probabilities</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived risk</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>7.05</td>
<td>4.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. n = 34 for each affect condition group. Highest scores imply greater preference on a 100-point scale or higher choice probability for the group/package tours option (Package A). Perceived risk was rated on a nine-point scale.
As shown in table 2, participants’ relative preferences tended to differ across affect conditions. An ANOVA yielded a significant main effect of affective states ($F(2, 99) = 14.42, p < .001$). A linear trend analysis indicated that preference for group/package tours was highest in the anxiety condition ($M = 74.17$) and lowest in the sadness condition ($M = 36.93$), with the neutral affect condition in between ($M = 53.18$), ($F(1, 99) = 5.45, p < .05$). This pattern of results supports hypothesis 1.

In terms of choice probabilities, the affect manipulation had parallel effects on them. The proportion of participants who chose group/package tours was lowest in the sadness condition (35%) and highest in the anxiety condition (71%), with the neutral affect condition again falling in between (53%). The linear trend reached significance (Mantel-Haenszel $\phi^2(1) = 8.50, p < .05, \phi = .29$). The results of choice probabilities are consistent with the hypothesis.

As to travelers’ perceived risk, an ANOVA of these ratings revealed a significant main effect of affective states ($F(2, 99) = 44.17, p < .001$). A linear trend analysis indicated that participants’ risk assessment was highest in the anxiety condition ($M = 7.05$) and lowest in the sadness condition ($M = 4.84$), with the neutral affect condition in between ($M = 3.89$), ($F(1, 99) = 7.70, p < .01$). This pattern of results supports hypothesis 2. Besides, participants’ perceived risk was negatively correlated with their willingness to travel, measured by a nine-point scale from “not at all” to “very much” ($r = -.37, p < .001$).

These results clearly indicate that negative affective states are not all equal in individuals’ decision making and judgments, and they seem to support the notion that travelers’ perceived risk will be affected by negative affective states such as anxiety and sadness. Moreover, these results cannot be explained in terms of judgment mood congruency. Both anxious and sad participants were in a negative mood. In the travel preferences data, compared to a neutral mood condition, anxious participants tended to favor one option (group/package tours), whereas sad participants tended to favor the other. Therefore, the mood-repair explanation (e.g., Schaller and Cialdini 1990; Zillmann 1988) may be more congenial with the mood management hypothesis. In other words, anxious and sad participants may have preferred one of the options because it would somehow make them “feel better.”

**EXPERIMENT 2**

This experiment was conducted to further examine whether travelers’ mood management for anxiety and sadness is an active process of affect-adjustment or a generalised motivational shift. It was predicted that the effects of anxiety and sadness on travel preferences would be stronger in the self decision condition than in the agent decision condition.

**Method**

One hundred and twenty college students were recruited for this experiment for course credits. They were randomly assigned to one of four conditions of a 2 (affective state: anxiety vs. sadness) x 2 (framing: self vs. agent) between-subjects design.

The procedure closely followed that of the first experiment, except no neutral affect condition was included. After being put into either an anxious or a sad state, participants were asked to evaluate the same choice set and travel risk as in experiment 1. The framing of the decision differed across conditions. In the self decision condition, participants received the same instructions as in experiment 1. They were instructed to evaluate the relative preferences of travel type as if they had to choose between group/package tours and individual travel for themselves. In the agent decision condition, participants were told to make the decision on behalf of someone else. The instructions emphasised that “the decision will not affect you personally.” After comparing the two options, participants first reported their relative preference of choice alternatives and then their choice between them.

**Results and Discussion**

The differences of affiliation motivation across groups were examined first. The result of an ANOVA showed that participants’ affiliation motivation across groups was not different ($F(3, 116) = 1.29, ns.$). This finding indicated that the travel preferences in subsequent analyses could not be explained by participants’ differences of affiliation motivation. Data from experiment 2 is shown in table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Affective state</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferences ratings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self $M$</td>
<td>73.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$SD$</td>
<td>29.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agent $M$</td>
<td>51.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$SD$</td>
<td>33.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice probabilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agent</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: $n = 30$ for each manipulative condition group. Highest scores imply a greater preference on a 100-point scale or highest choice probability for the group/package tours option (Package A).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PREFERENCE RATINGS AND CHOICE PROBABILITIES IN EXPERIMENT 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferences ratings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self $M$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$SD$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agent $M$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$SD$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice probabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: $n = 30$ for each manipulative condition group. Highest scores imply a greater preference on a 100-point scale or highest choice probability for the group/package tours option (Package A).
The preference ratings were submitted to a 2 (affective state) x 2 (framing) ANOVA. The analysis revealed a significant main effect of mood ($F(1, 116) = 8.09, p < .01$), indicating that, overall, participants with an anxious affect had a higher relative preference for group/package tours ($M = 62.32, SD = 33.70$), whereas participants with a sad affect had a stronger relative preference for individual travel ($M = 46.80, SD = 28.83$). This finding replicates the first experiment’s main results. More importantly, the analysis also revealed a significant affective state by framing interaction ($F(1, 116) = 13.87, p < .001$). Planned contrasts show that the simple main effect of affective states was significant in the self decision condition ($F(1, 58) = 23.89, p < .01$) but not in the agent decision condition ($F(1, 58) = 0.53, ns$). The findings indicated that the effects of affective states on travel decisions were only prominent when the outcome would affect them (the self decision condition) and thus seemed to support an active affect-adjustment explanation as opposed to a more passive attentional shift.

The choice probabilities between the two travel types exhibited a directionally consistent pattern (see table 3). A two-way (affective state by framing) log-linear analysis revealed a significant affective state by framing interaction ($\chi^2(1) = 6.97, p < .01$), showing that the probability of choosing the travel type was different between the self decision condition and the agent decision condition. For the main effect of affective state ($\chi^2(1) = 4.85, p < .05, \phi = .20$), the probability of choosing group/package tours (Package A) was higher among participants with an anxious affect (55%) than among participants with a sad affect (35%). This tendency was primarily driven by participants in the self decision condition (anxiety = 67%, sadness = 23%, $z = 3.82, p < .01, \phi = .44$). This tendency was not significant in the agent decision condition (anxiety = 43%, sadness = 47%, $z = 0.31, ns$).

As in the first experiment, anxious participants again tended to prefer group/package tours, whereas sad participants were found to exhibit greater preference for individual travel. Moreover, the pattern of travel preferences was contingent upon the framing of the decision. The findings of perceived risk also revealed that the effects of affective states on perceived risk were only prominent when the outcome would influence them (the self decision condition). Thus, an active affect-adjustment explanation appears more consistent with the data of travel preferences and judgments.

**GENERAL DISCUSSION**

According to the perspective of affect-as-information, moods or affective states influence decision making. Individuals with different affective states tend to motivate them to adopt different ways of coping and mood adjustment (Schaller and Cialdini 1990; Zillmann 1988). Thus, different negative affective states will exert differential impacts on decision making and trigger varied implicit goals (Schwarz 1990). This paper shows that two affect states of the same negative valence—anxiety and sadness—can generate distinct influences on travelers’ preferences for travel type as well as their risk perceptions.

In terms of choice situation in travel type examined in this study, it was found that individuals with an anxious affect were likely to prefer group/package tours in which uncertainty and risk are less worrying, whereas individuals with a sad affect were inclined to selecting individual travel, which provides a sense of personal achievement and challenge as a potential reward. Furthermore, travelers’ perceived risk was affected by their negative affective states. The results in risk perceptions indicate that anxious participants were more sensitive to travel risk and showed higher perceived risk (see also Schwarz 1990), whereas sad participants were less sensitive to travel risk and exhibited lower perceived risk (see also Forgas 1991). In general, research findings supported the derived predictions.

In experiment 2, the pattern of travel preferences for group/package tours or individual travel depended on the framing of the decision. While travel preferences showed the predicted affective bias in the self decision condition, the preferences were insensitive to participants’ affective states in the agent decision condition. This contingency appears to rule out a passive, generalised, motivational shift. If the process had been beyond participants’ control, a parallel affective bias should have been observed in the agent decision condition. Therefore, the data in this research appears more consistent with an active affect-adjustment explanation. Individuals with anxiety or sadness may be inclined to assess the feeling implications of their decisions or judgments, asking themselves, “What would I feel better about?” When travelers have to choose between group/package tours or individual travel, those with an anxious affect may intuit that they would feel better about the travel type that can satisfy the emerging need for reducing uncertainty and risk, whereas those with a sad affect may intuit that they would feel better if they chose the option from which they could obtain a potential reward. However, if the task is framed as an agent decision task, anxiety and sadness cease to influence people’s decisions or judgments, presumably because people’s feelings are less relevant when they are making decisions on behalf of someone else (see Forgas 1991).

The findings have substantive theoretical implications. These motivational inclinations from individuals’ mood management may shape decision making above and beyond the previously identified effects of negative affects, such as coloring and processing interference (e.g., Keltner, et al. 1993; Pham 1988). It is noteworthy that the observed biases occurred even though the affect-inducing events (manipulated by the emotional-event recollection technique) and the decision targets (travel type) were completely unrelated. Findings in this study also have implications for coping strategies in mood management. If travelers tend to use affective information in making decisions, coping strategies that address specific effects of affective states could be an important way of better understanding the repertory of travelers.

With respect to limitations and future directions, perceived risk was measured by a single item. Future research may examine whether the summation score approach exhibits a different picture from the single global rating approach. In real-life travel choices, travel planning is a process that takes more time than in the experimental condition and during this time consumers are highly involved. Future research may use a more vivid scenario or adopt a field study to expand the external validity by demonstrating the impacts of anxiety and sadness in a real consumer setting. Moreover, the framing of self versus agent was employed in our manipulation. The differential effects of these negative moods became undermined when participants made decisions on behalf of others. Though the findings were more consistent with the active affect-
adjustment process explanation, the importance of consequences or personal relevance may also serve as substitute explanations. Future research should be geared to formalise the conditions under which one explanation (e.g., active affect-adjustment) is more likely to apply than other explanations, and it should scrutinise the impacts of negative affective states on travel decisions by taking need relevance into consideration. Finally, since the choice domain in our studies revolved around trade-offs, it would be interesting to investigate how anxiety and sadness influence decision processes about purely potential gains.

As travel and leisure are playing increasingly important roles for human life in the 21st century, they are also a prevalent way for people to accommodate, balance, or compensate their negative moods or affective states in everyday life (Orsenga-Smith et al. 2004; Payne 2002). Marketers in the travel and leisure industry as well as health counselors can, based on the mood management approach, work out tailor-made travel packages or schedules for travelers with different moods and design activities to satisfy the corresponding needs induced by different affective states.

REFERENCES


Schwarz, N. and G. Clore (1996), “Feelings and...


