

A Model of Motivational Spillover: When One Thing Leads to Another

Yvette Quintela

Dissertation submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
In
Psychology

John J. Donovan, Ph.D. (Chair)
Kevin Carlson, Ph.D.
Roseanne Foti, Ph.D.
Neil M. Hauenstein, Ph.D.

September 2, 2005
Blacksburg, VA

Keywords: Motivational spillover, goal performance discrepancies, positive and negative affect, self-efficacy, goal-setting

A Model of Motivational Spillover: When One Thing Leads to Another

Yvette Quintela

Abstract

Few studies have examined whether performance feedback on a given task can have implications for motivational processes on an altogether distinct task. The present study proposes and tests a model for motivational spillover in a goal-setting context. Participants (N = 201) were provided with goal-performance discrepancy feedback (GPD) on a creativity task (CT) and were subsequently asked to complete an unrelated stock-predicting task (SPT). Results indicate that GPD feedback on the CTs was positively associated with positive affect such that negative GPDs resulted in low levels of positive affect and positive GPDs resulted in high levels of positive affect. This positive affect was in turn positively related to self-efficacy for the SPT. Self-efficacy was positively associated with personal goals, and goals were positively related to performance on the SPT. These findings provide initial evidence for the occurrence of positive and negative motivational spillover in a natural performance setting.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost I would like to thank my advisor, John Donovan. His encouragement and support throughout my graduate career helped me tremendously. He was always ready to listen and offer advice when I needed it. In addition, he helped push me when I needed to be pushed. As a result, I became a better writer and researcher, and for that I will always be grateful.

Second, I would like to thank my committee members for providing me with their constructive criticism and suggestions for improvement, which enhanced the quality of this dissertation. Most of all, I thank you for requiring me to think “out loud” during the proposal and defense meetings about conceptual topics that had not crossed my mind. It was a great learning experience for me.

Third, I would like to thank the special people in my life that helped me make it through. It would have been difficult to go through this process without the support of my fellow graduate students and terrific friends who were always there to cheer me up during the lows, and celebrate with me during the highs. Victoria, Leifur, Matt, Gene, and Megan- I can't thank you enough for your friendship and support.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents, sister, and Lance for their unconditional love and support. In times of doubt and uncertainty all of you helped me believe in myself. Each of you served as my inspiration and pillar of strength. If it were not for your encouraging words and heartening smiles, day in and day out, I could not have realized this dream.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to Nery and Carlos. You have always inspired me to reach high and work hard for my dreams. I am grateful to have parents like you.

Table of Contents

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Page</u>
Introduction.....	1
The Concept of Motivational Spillover.....	2
Insufficient Theoretical Exploration of Motivational Spillover.....	3
Goal Hierarchy Approach.....	4
Speed of Goal Processing.....	8
Research on Spillover Processes.....	11
Quintela and Donovan (2004).....	14
Model for Motivational Spillover.....	16
Theoretical Framework for the Processes of Motivational Spillover.....	17
Consequences of GPDs.....	18
GPD and Affect.....	18
Affect and Self-efficacy.....	22
Affect Priming Model.....	23
Affect-as-Information.....	24
Self-efficacy and Goal-setting.....	27
Goal Setting and Performance.....	29
Method.....	30
Participants.....	30
Procedure.....	30
Practice Trials.....	31
Creativity Tasks.....	31

Stock Predicting Task.....	31
Creativity Performance Trial.....	33
Measures.....	35
Goal-Performance Discrepancy (GPD).....	35
Affect.....	35
Specific Self-efficacy.....	35
Performance Goal -Creativity Task.....	36
Performance Goal- Stock Predicting Task.....	36
Task Distinctiveness Questionnaire.....	36
Analyses.....	36
Results.....	38
Task distinctiveness.....	38
Control variables.....	38
GPDs.....	38
Test of the Hypothesized Model.....	39
Hypothesis 1.....	39
Hypothesis 2.....	39
Hypothesis 3.....	40
Hypothesis 4.....	40
Summary.....	40
Alternative Models.....	41
Discussion.....	41
Findings and Contributions.....	42

GPDs and Affect.....	42
Affect and Self-efficacy.....	44
Self-efficacy, Goals, and Task Performance.....	47
Implications.....	48
Study Limitations.....	53
Conclusion.....	55
References.....	56

List of Tables

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>
Table 1. Intercorrelations Between Variables.....	68

List of Figures

<u>Figure</u>	<u>Page</u>
Figure 1. Control system goal hierarchy.....	71
Figure 2. Proposed model of motivational spillover.....	72
Figure 3. Proposed model with standardized path coefficients.....	73
Figure 4. Sample Distribution of Negative Affect.....	74