

ABSTRACT

SHARING JOY THROUGH TECHNOLOGY: THE EFFECT OF SYNCHRONICITY, NONVERBAL CUES, AND PERSISTENCE ON AFFECTIVE WELL-BEING

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As an important form of self-disclosure, sharing positive events is related to increased positive affect and reduced negative affect, i.e., affective well-being. The act of communicating a positive personal event to another person and reaping the intrapersonal and interpersonal benefits of such communication is termed capitalization in social psychology. Previous research identified perceived partner responsiveness and memorability of the positive event as two central mechanisms underlying capitalization's positive effect on well-being. One understudied area in this line of research is the technologies through which capitalization processes are mediated. In terms of the processes and outcomes, does it make a difference when capitalization is carried out in text, voice calls, video calls, or social media? By drawing upon literature in computer-mediated communication and interpersonal communication, this dissertation examines the mechanisms and outcomes of capitalization using various information and communication technologies (ICTs). In characterizing technology use, this study moves beyond the descriptive and objective differences between specific forms of ICTs. Instead, it focuses on individuals' perceived features of ICTs, including synchronicity, nonaudio-based nonverbal cues, audio-based nonverbal cues, and persistence while sharing a particular positive event. The main finding of the study was that perceived partner responsiveness was positively related to state affective well-being but not global affective well-being. The relationship of perceived partner responsiveness on state affective well-being was also moderated by relationship closeness, in that responsiveness from less close communication partners was related to a bigger increase in state affective well-being. Synchronicity and audio-based nonverbal cues were positively related to perceived partner responsiveness, which in turn, was positively related to state affective well-being.

In contrast, nonaudio-based nonverbal cues were negatively associated with perceived partner responsiveness, which in turn, was negatively related to state affective well-being. None of the features' direct relationships with perceived partner responsiveness and affective well-being was moderated by relationship closeness. Still, the negative indirect relationship between nonaudio-based nonverbal cues and state affective well-being was moderated by relationship closeness. Specifically, the negative indirect effect of nonaudio-based nonverbal cues on state well-being decreased as relationship closeness increased. Perceived nonaudio-based nonverbal cues also had a direct positive association with both state affective well-being and global affective well-being. Lastly, perceived persistence was related to both state and global well-being through memorability of the positive event. This study serves as a framework for uncovering how features of ICTs can play a role in processes and outcomes of capitalization. Theoretical and practical implications and limitations of the findings are discussed.