



Honors Research Assistant Program

Title: The Effects of Work Events on Employee Mood

Description of the Research: This project is a review of the literature to determine the extent to which various types of work events (e.g., positive feedback, criticism, social interactions, etc) influence employee mood. It has long been thought that good events make employee happy, but the effects are fleeting and that bad events make employees angry or frustrated or sad, and these effects are long lasting. In the past 10 years there have been a number of studies focused on work events that suggest bad mood may be dispositional. That is, employees come to work and bring their tendency for bad moods with them. In contrast, work events seem to have a stronger impact on employees' good moods, and good moods may have a positive benefit on employee health.

The purpose of our project is to determine exactly how various types of work events influence employee mood and for how long. We will be reviewing studies in the existing literature to examine the effects of both personality and work events on employee's good and bad moods -- both at work and after the work day ends.

Responsibilities of the Student: The Carlson Honors Research Assistant will work closely with three Ph.D. students (two from business and one from psychology) and me to read and review the literature. The work of the student research assistant will be to find and catalogue articles that fit our criteria and to report to the working group on these findings. This project provides a unique opportunity for an honors student to be in on the ground floor of a project that would be suitable for an honors thesis. The student will be involved in the initial discussion of the project plan, as the formal plan of work is being developed this fall (2009). The student will spend time online and in the library searching for and coding articles that have the information we seek on work events and mood. They will learn about some basic statistics (correlations) and about experience sampling research (e.g., measurement of work events and mood over time, using technologies such as Palm Pilots), as well as learning about how work events affect employees. The student will be expected to attend regularly scheduled lab meetings and will be expected to be an active participant in theoretical discussions about the project as well as about the data we are examining.

Approximate Number of Hours/Schedule:

There will be some flexibility in hours for the literature search work, but we anticipate about 6 hours a week on average, including lab meetings.

Honors Research Assistant Program, Fall 2009

Qualifications: Students need be familiar only with routine Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, etc), but they will use SPSS and we can teach that if need be.