

The Myth of Happy but Absentminded People:

*Are Happy People Mindless or Mindful
Processors of Information?*

Athens University of Economics & Business

Department of Business Administration

Seminar Series

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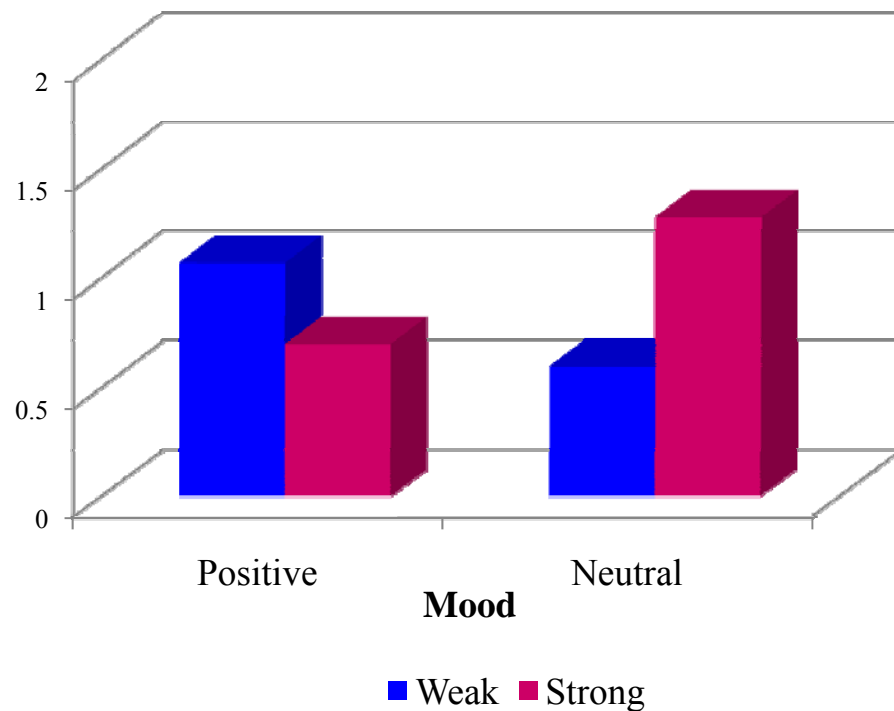
Positive Affect & Heuristic Processing

- ◆ Positive mood impairs cognitive capacity and results in heuristic processing.
 - ❖ Worth & Mackie, 1987
 - ❖ Mackie & Worth, 1989
 - ❖ Bless, Mackie & Schwarz, 1992

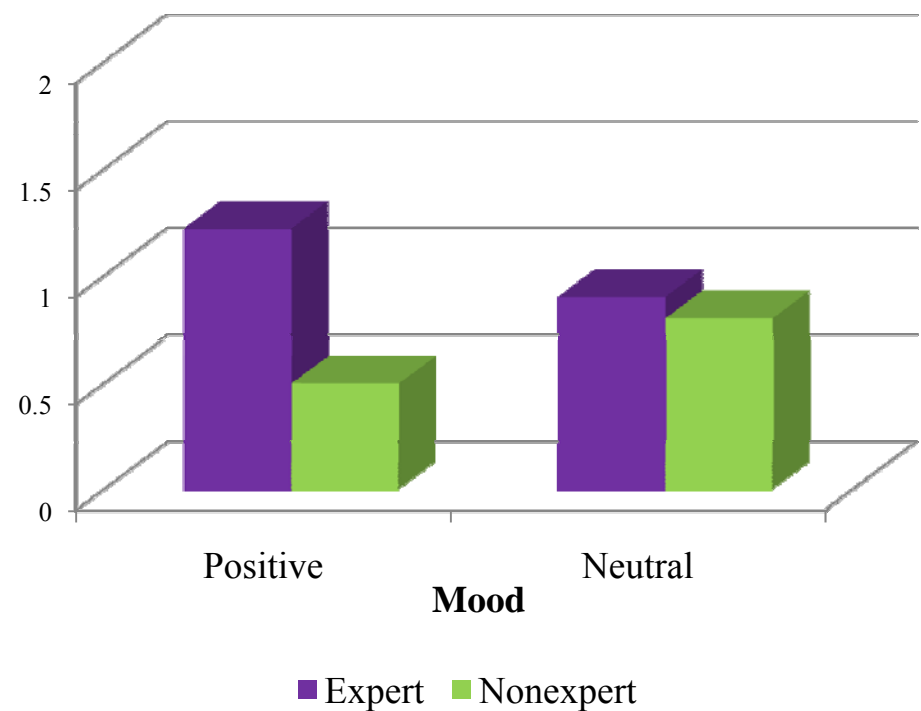


Positive Affect & Heuristic Processing: Worth & Mackie, 1987

Attitude Change as a Function of Mood and Argument Quality

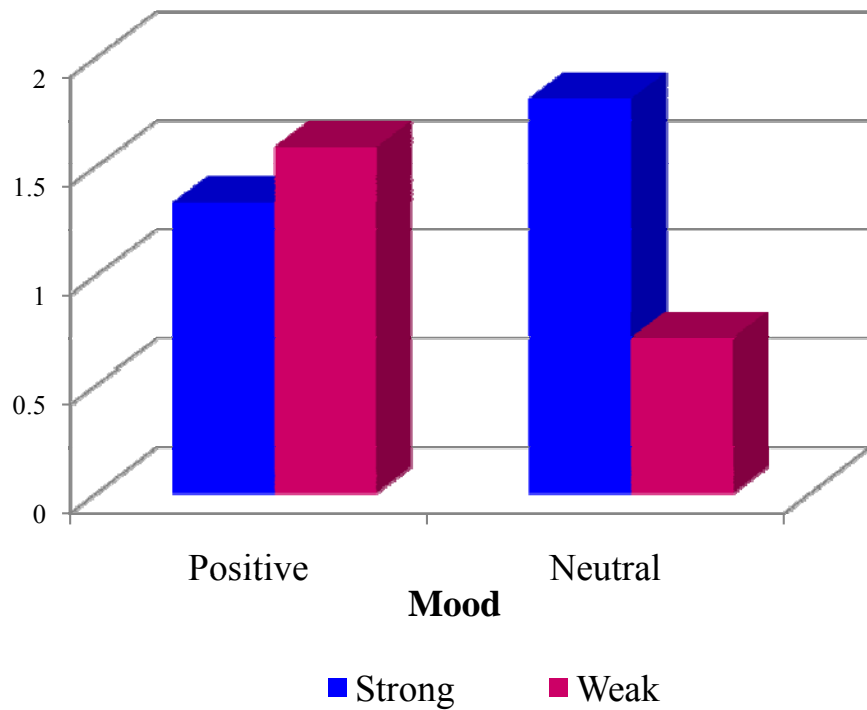


Attitude Change as a Function of Mood and Source Credibility

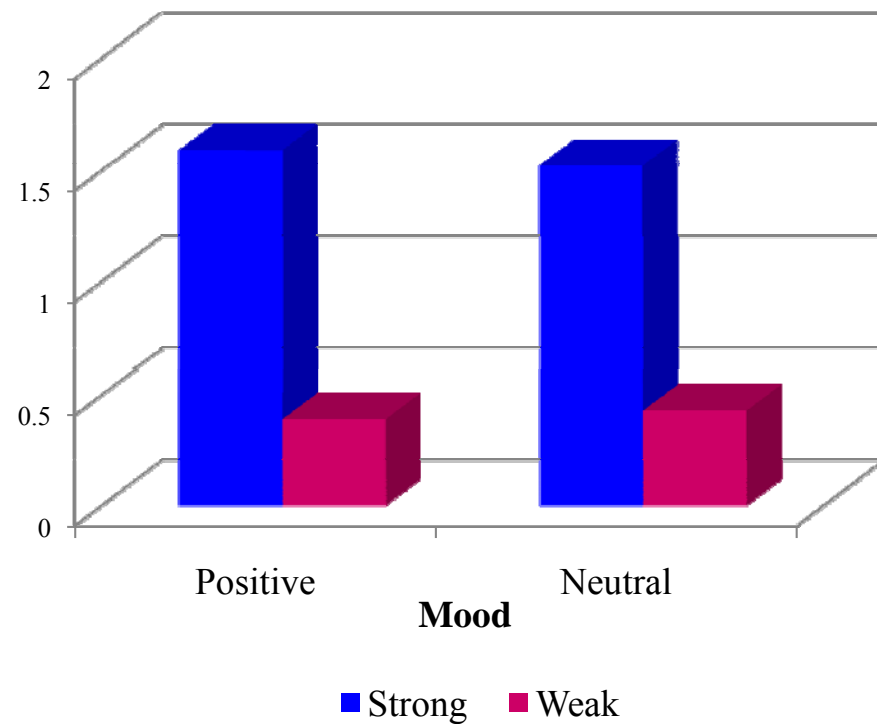


Positive Affect & Heuristic Processing: Mackie & Worth 1989

Attitude Change (Limited Exposure)

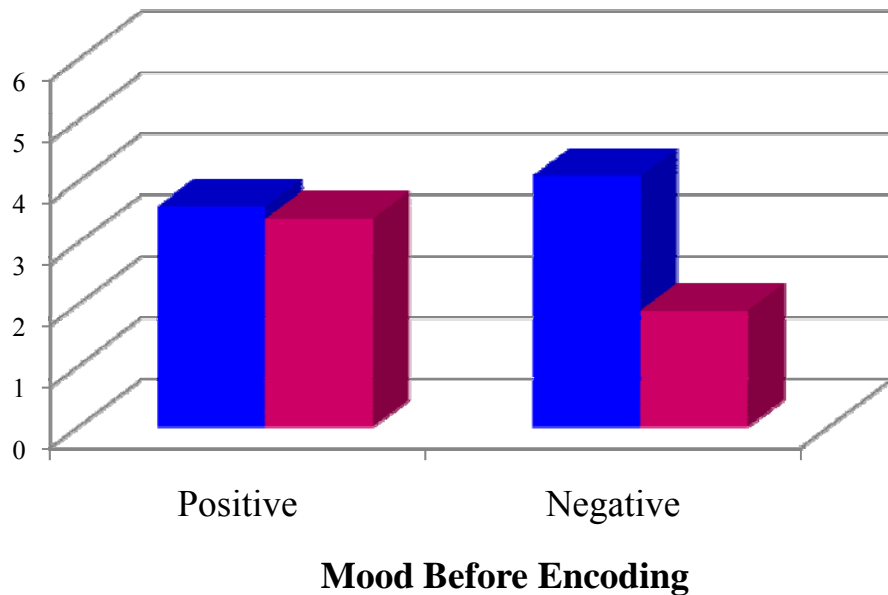


Attitude Change (Unlimited Exposure)



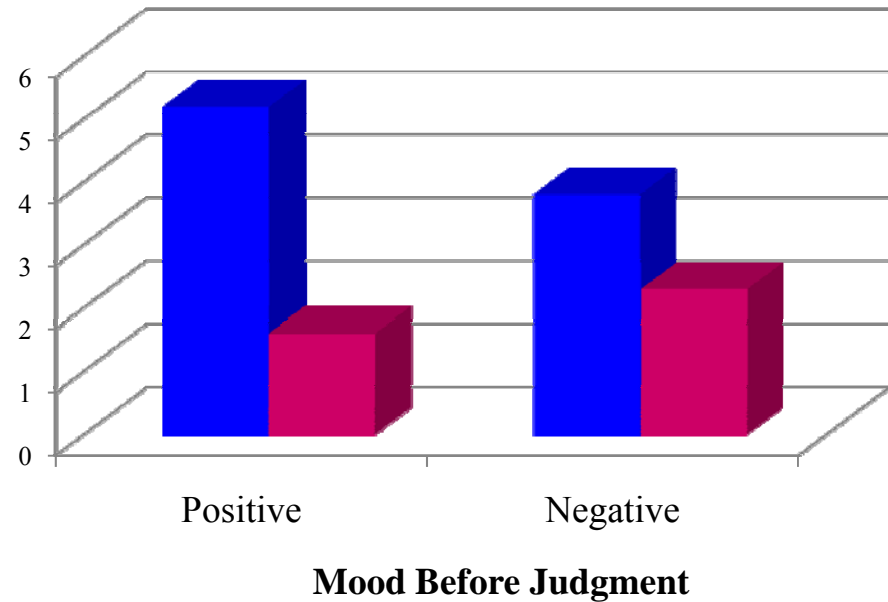
Positive Affect & Heuristic Processing: Bless, Mackie & Schwarz, 1992

**Attitude as a Function of Mood and
Argument Quality**



■ Strong ■ Weak

**Attitude as a Function of Mood and
Argument Quality**



■ Strong ■ Weak



Positive Affect & Relational Elaboration

◆ **Positive mood facilitates relational elaboration**

❖ **Creativity**

Isen Daubman & Nowicki, 1987

❖ **Categorization**

Murray, Sujan, Hirt & Sujan, 1990

❖ **Memory**

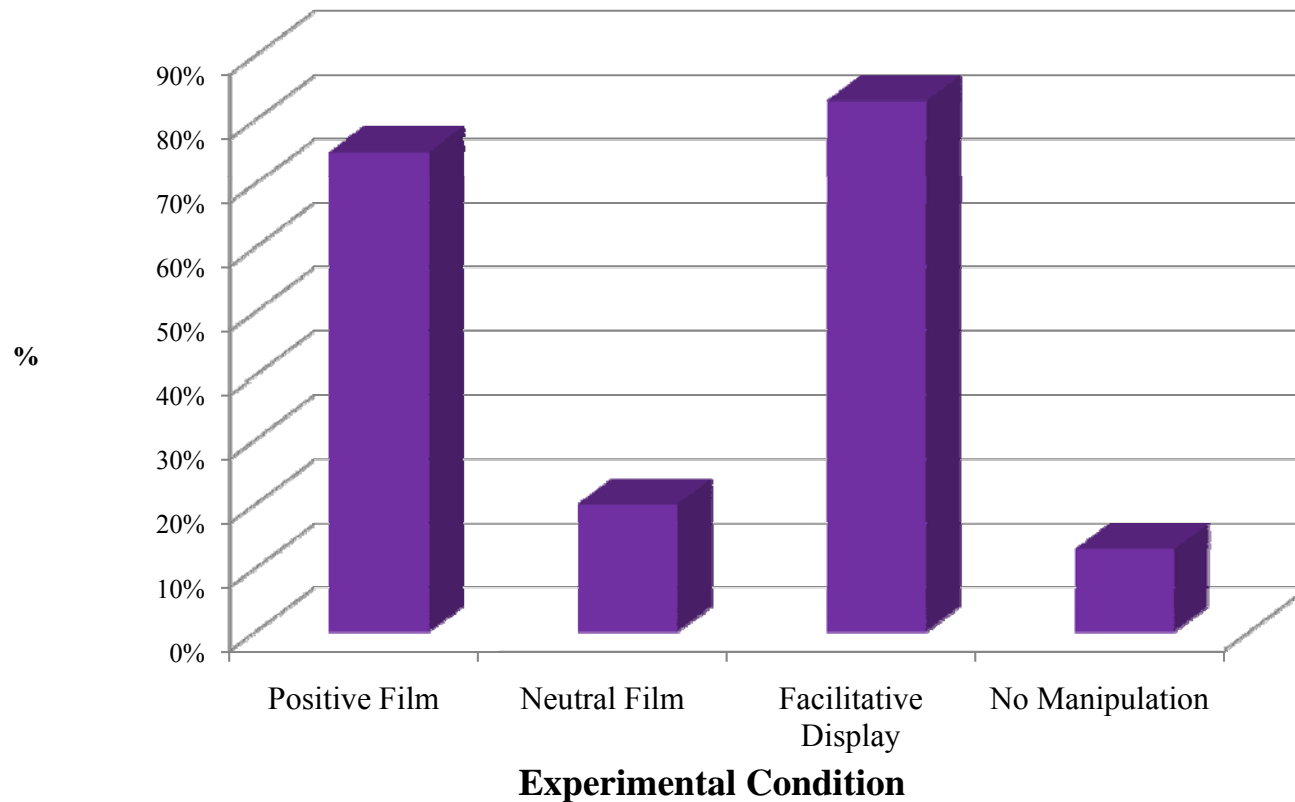
Lee & Sternthal, 1999



Positive Affect & Creativity:

Isen, Daubman & Nowicki, 1987

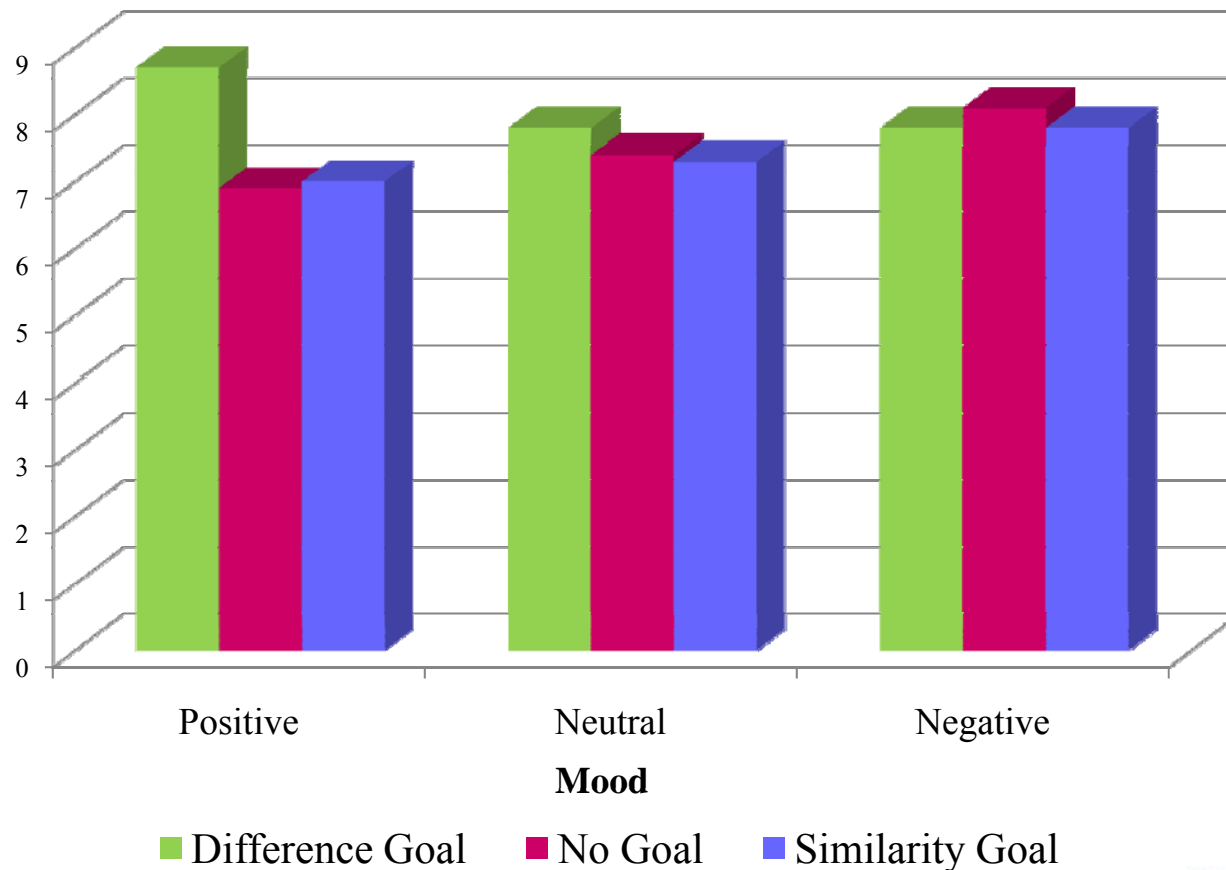
Percentage of Participants Solving the Puzzle



Positive Affect & Categorization:

Murray, Sujan, Hirt & Sujan 1990

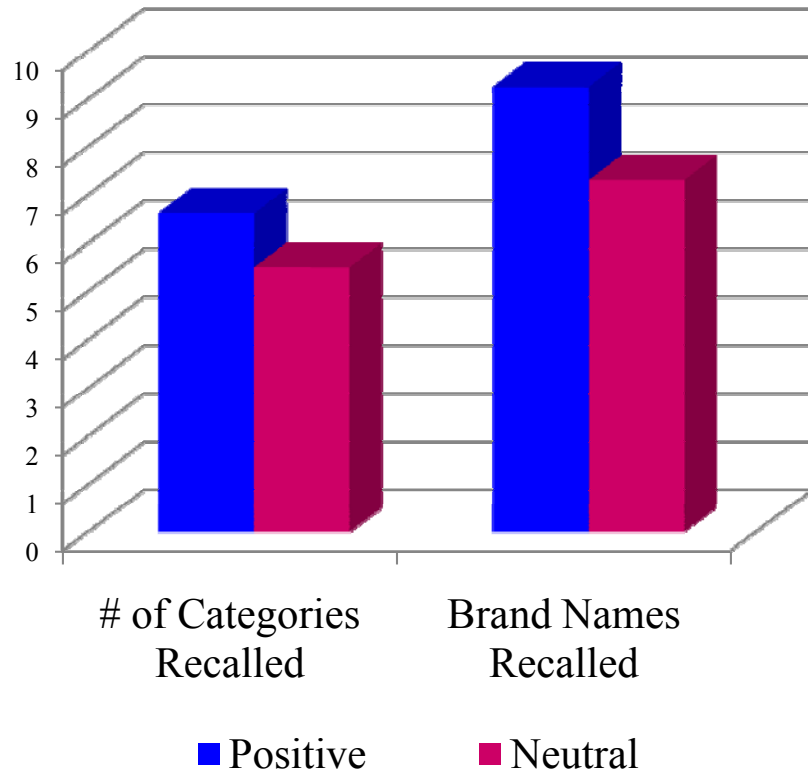
of Categories Formed as a Function of Mood and Processing Goal



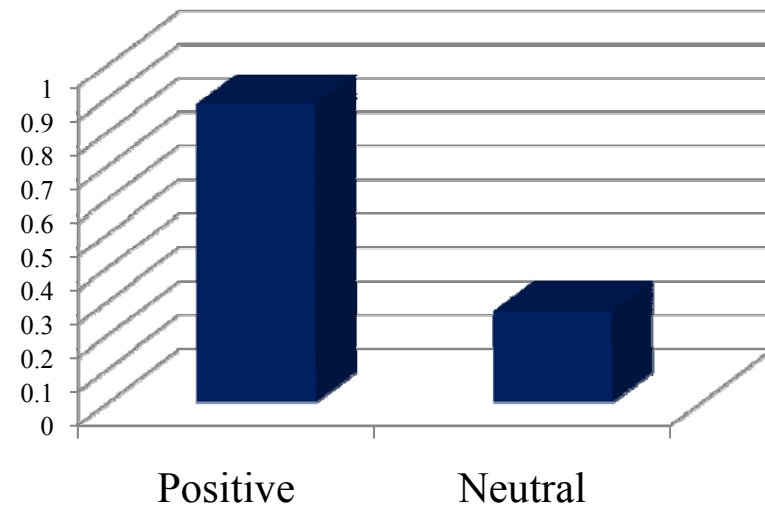
Positive Affect & Memory:

Lee & Sternthal, 1999

Recall



Clustering

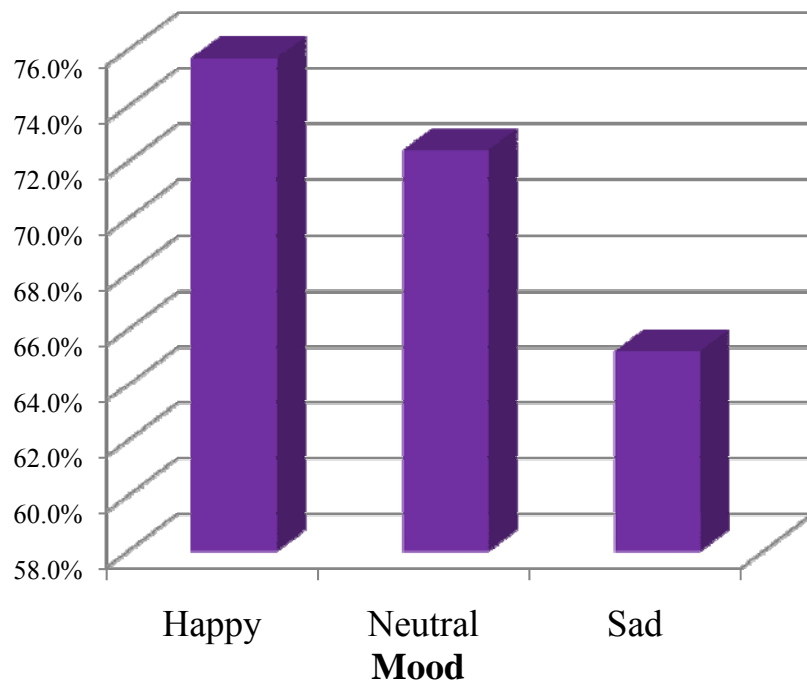


Positive Affect & Cognitive Capacity

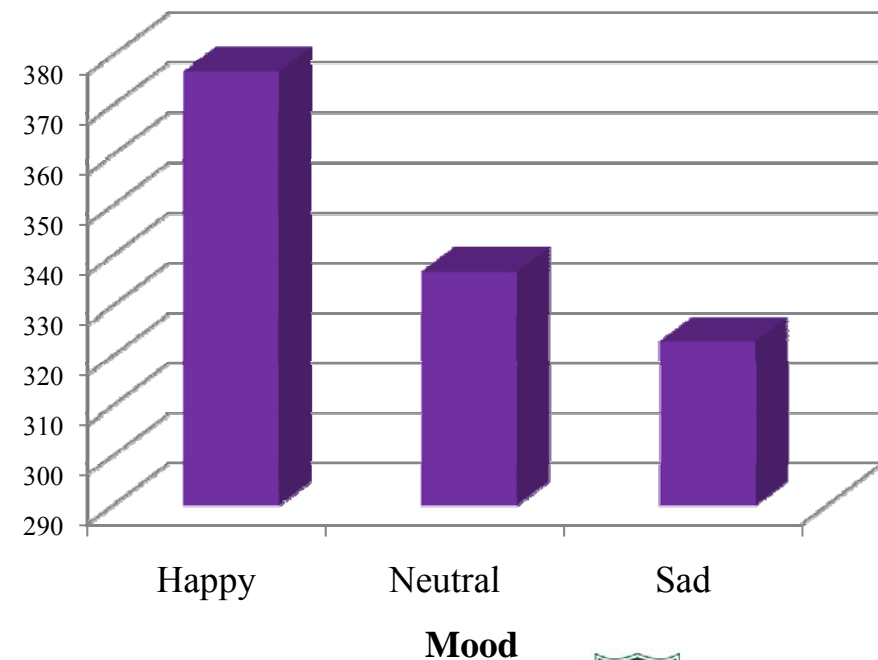
- ◆ Positive mood does not impair cognitive capacity

Bless, Clore, Schwarz, Colisano, Rabe & Wölk, 1996

Reliance in the Use of Scripts



Performance of d2 Task



The Research Problem

If people in a positive mood are strategic processors of information, what would account for the results that happy people were equally persuaded by strong and weak arguments (e.g., Mackie & Worth 1989)?



An Alternative Explanation

- ◆ Positive mood induces individuals to engage in creative and relational elaboration. Thus they may be generating their own arguments when encountering persuasive messages.



Objective of Study I

- ◆ To demonstrate the superior ability of people in a positive mood to recall information from memory in the absence of cues.



Study I

Design:

2 (mood: positive vs. neutral)

Dependent Measures:

- ◆ Brand Name Generation

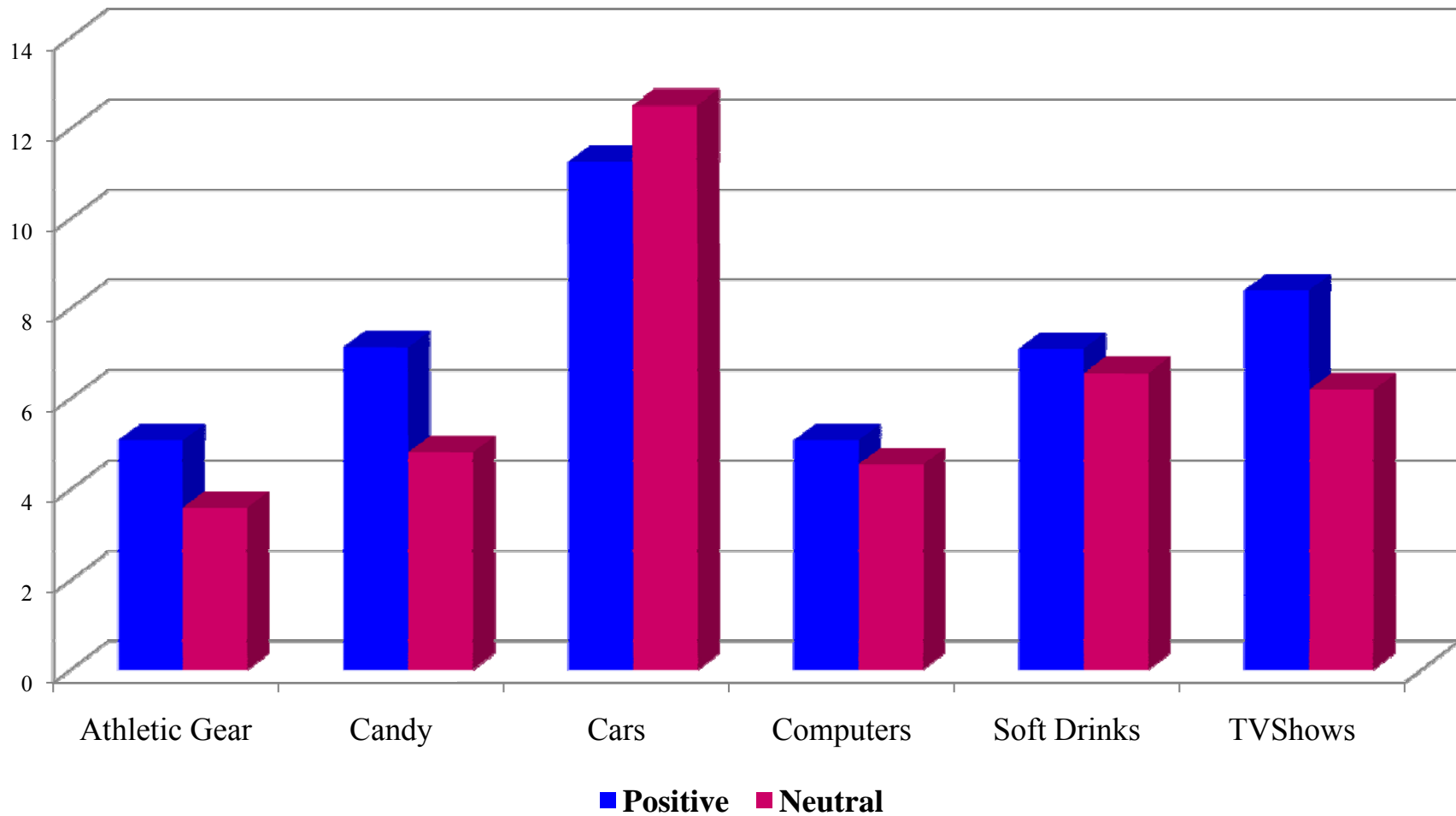


Study I: Procedure

- ◆ Mood induction (life event inventory task)
- ◆ Mood scale
- ◆ Brand name generation
 - ❖ Athletic Gear
 - ❖ Candy
 - ❖ Cars
 - ❖ Computers
 - ❖ Soft drinks
 - ❖ TV shows
- ◆ Miscellaneous measures



Study I Results: Brand Name Generation



Objective of Study II

- ◆ To investigate how people in positive mood process persuasive messages
 - ❖ Can they discern between strong versus weak arguments?
 - ❖ Are they persuaded by these arguments?
 - ❖ Will they generate additional support arguments on their own?



Study II

Design:

2 (mood: positive vs. neutral)
x 2 (argument strength: strong vs. weak)

Dependent Measures:

- ◆ Attitude Measure
- ◆ Quality of the argument strength
- ◆ Additional support arguments



Examples of Strong Arguments

Individuals who have paid for a parking permit often find that there are no available parking spaces on campus under the current policy. This is unfair as they are being charged a considerable sum of money for a parking space that is, in fact, not available.

The campus police could more efficiently monitor the reserved lots. They estimated that this increased vigilance could decrease car theft on campus by up to 30%.



Examples of Weak Arguments

Many students have complained that it can be hard to meet people on campus. If you park next to the same people every day for a year, it is possible that many of these “neighbors” may actually blossom into long-lasting friendships.

Having one’s own parking space would also give the student a feeling of being important, special, and valued on campus. And when the student’s friends or family visited, they would see that the student was being treated as a valued member of the university community.

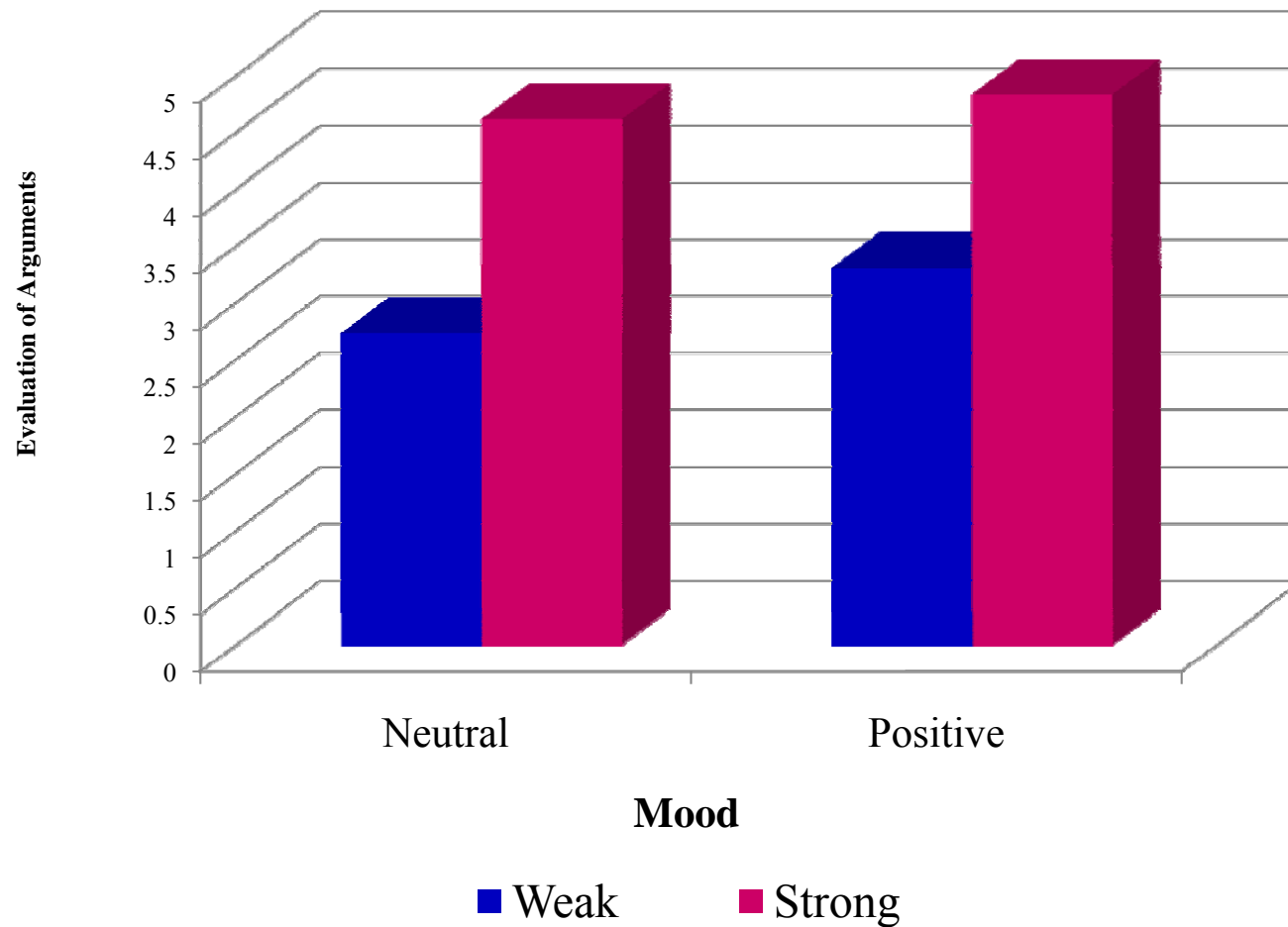


Study II: Procedure

- ◆ Mood induction (watch and evaluate 7 commercials)
- ◆ Mood scale
- ◆ Read arguments in support of introducing a new parking policy on campus that will be disadvantageous to the participants
- ◆ Respond to questions tapping their attitude
- ◆ Rate the quality of the arguments
- ◆ Generate additional support arguments
- ◆ Miscellaneous measures

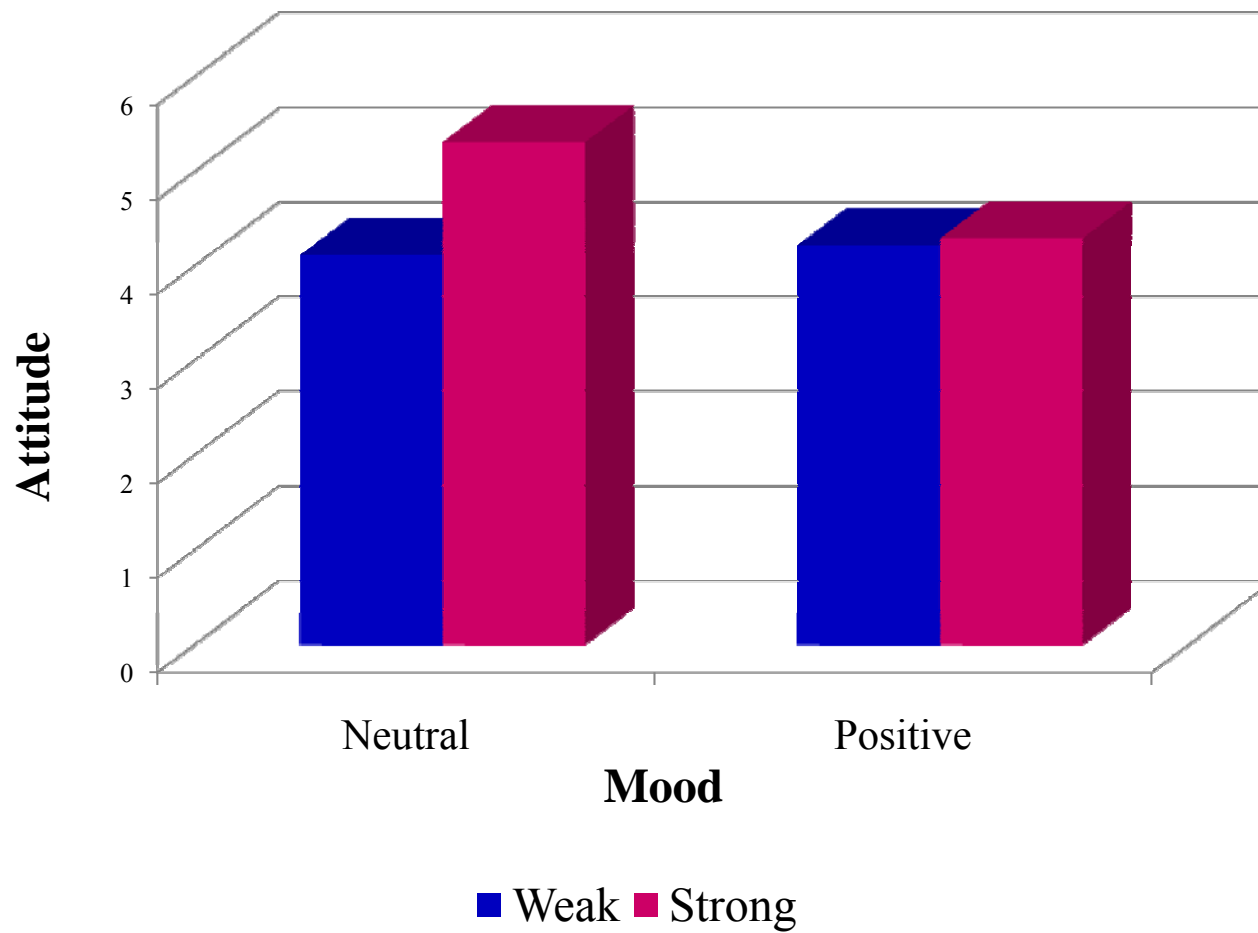


Study II Results: Discernment of Argument Quality

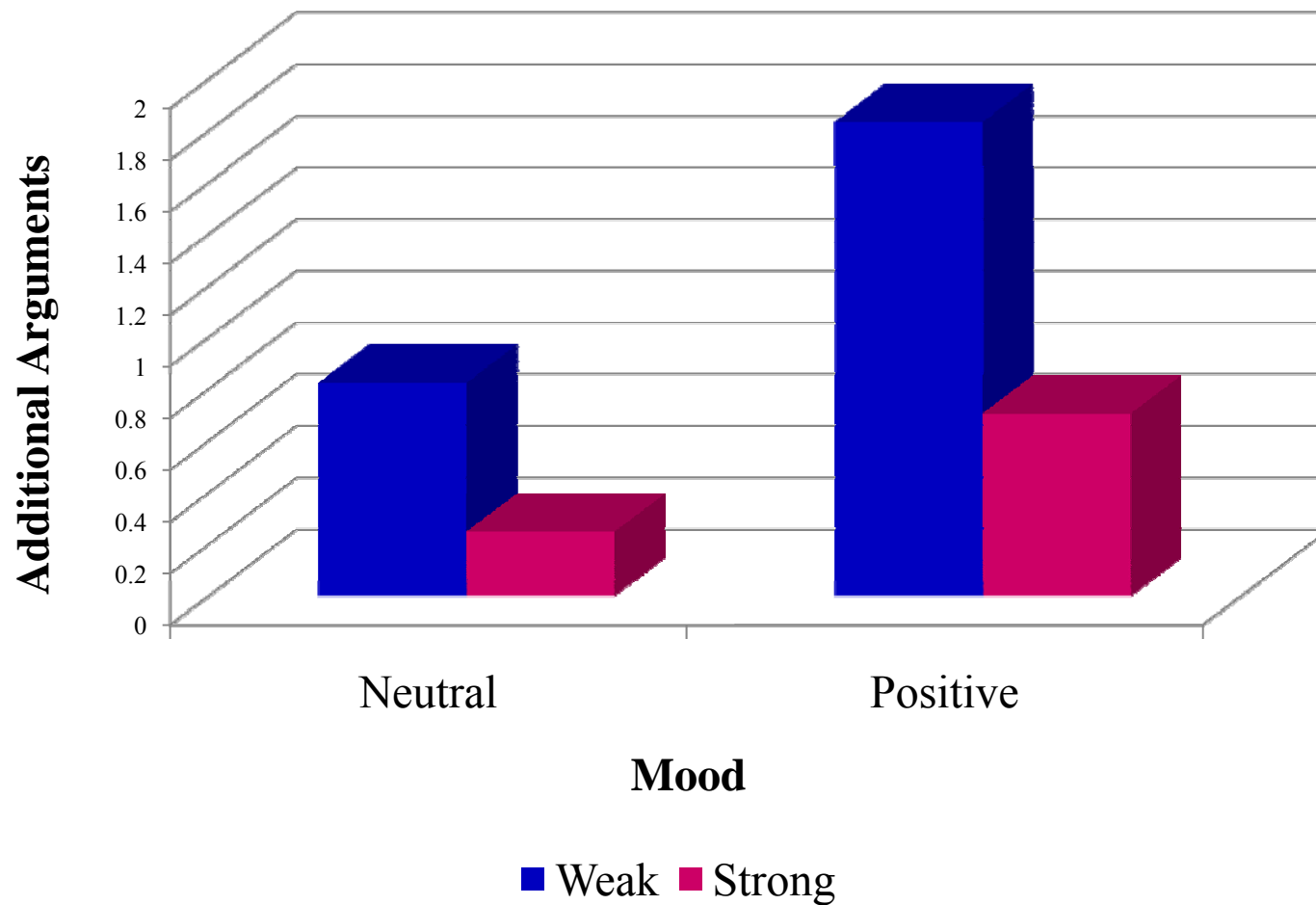


Study II Results:

Attitude



Study II Results: *Additional Support Arguments Generated*



Objective of Study III

- ◆ To investigate if people in a positive mood generate additional arguments spontaneously
- ◆ To the mediating effect of additional arguments on persuasion
- ◆ To test the robustness of the findings and procedures used in Study II



Study III

Design:

- 2 mood (positive vs. neutral)
- x 2 argument strength (strong vs. weak)
- x 2 argument position (in favor vs. against)

Dependent Measures:

- ◆ Thoughts
- ◆ Attitude measures
- ◆ Quality of the argument strength
- ◆ Reasons



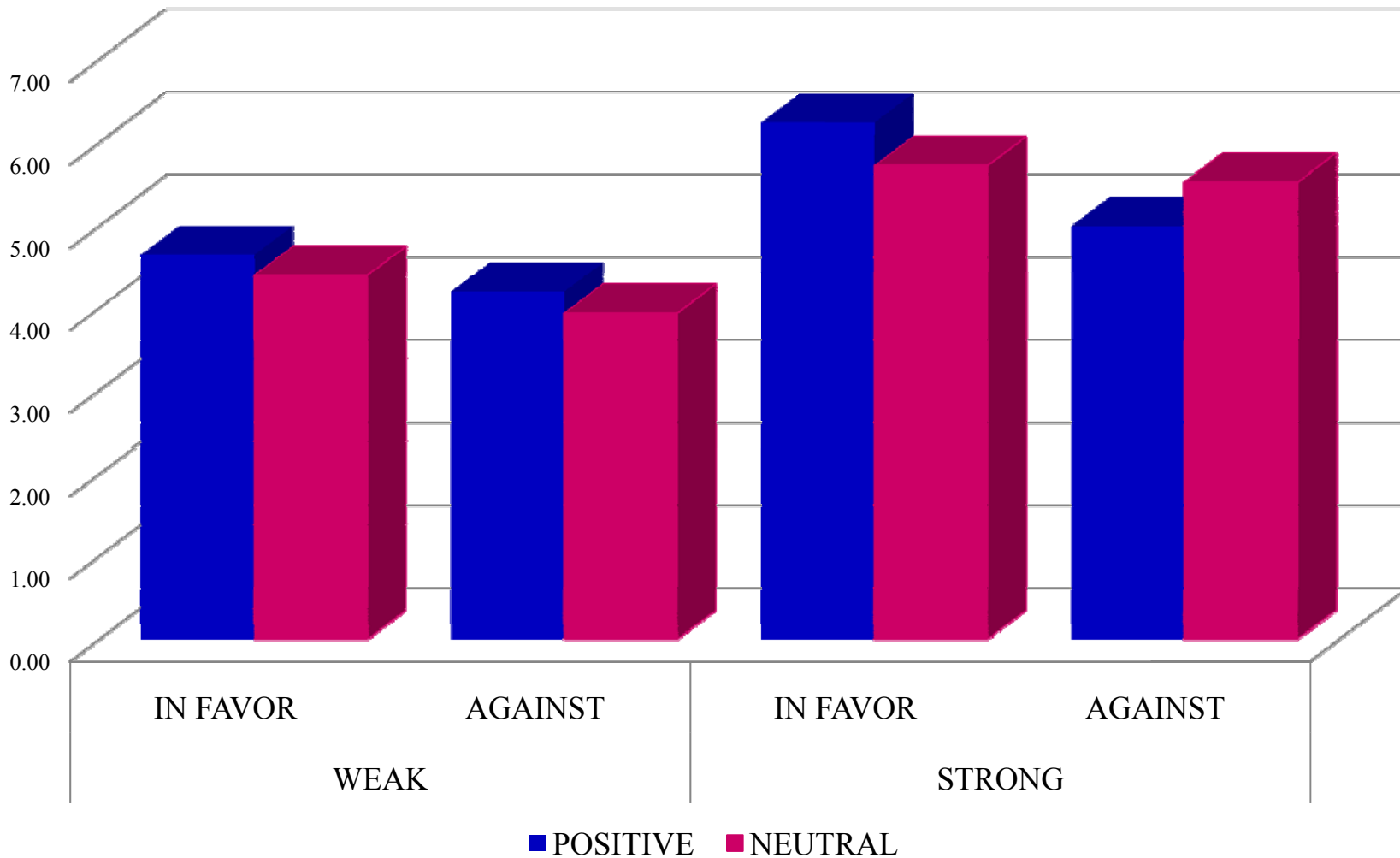
Study III: Procedure

- ◆ Mood induction (empathy task)
- ◆ Mood scale
- ◆ Read arguments in favor or against of introducing a new parking policy on campus that will be disadvantageous to the participants
- ◆ List all thoughts that came to mind while reading the arguments
- ◆ Respond to questions tapping their attitude
- ◆ Rate the quality of the arguments
- ◆ Miscellaneous measures



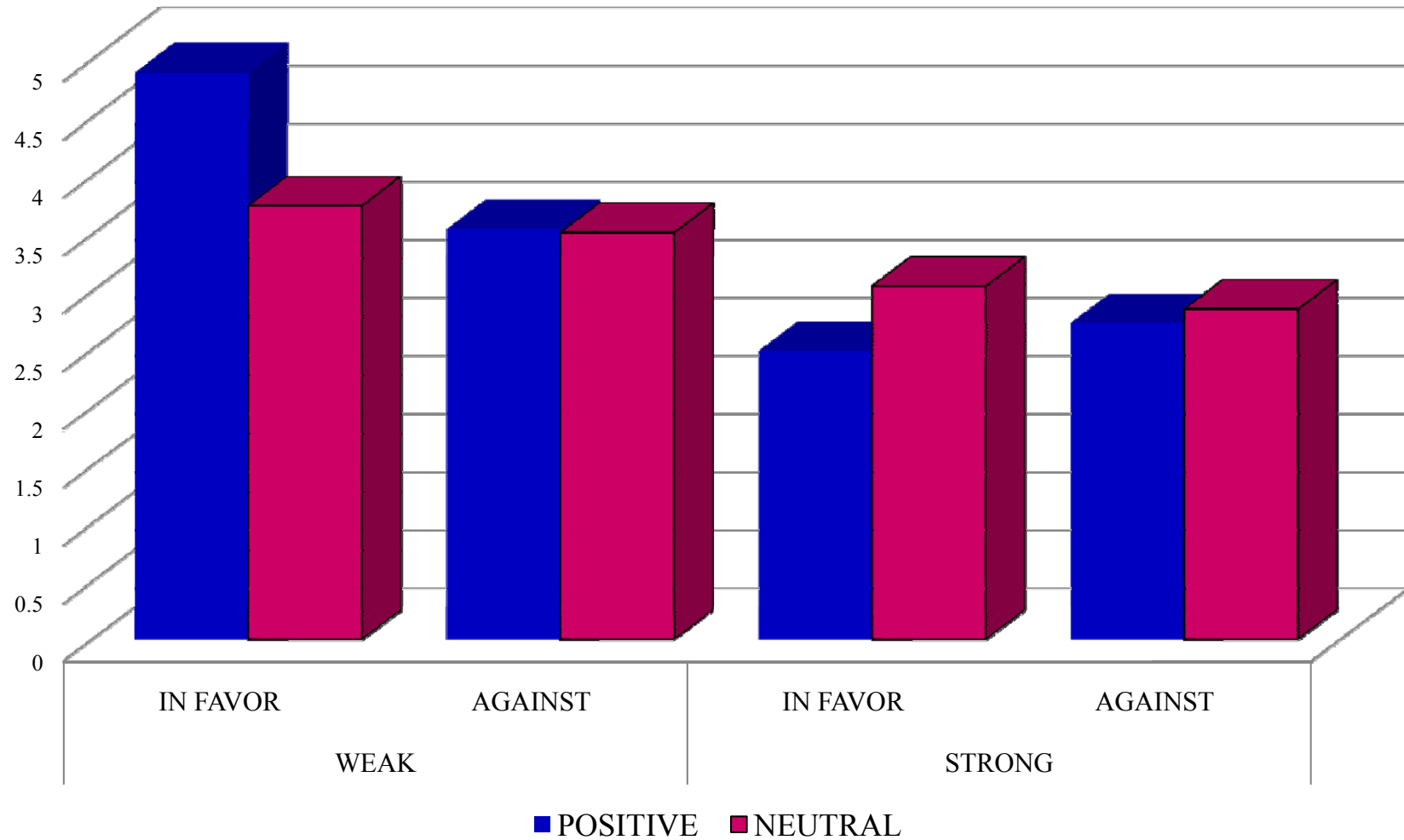
Study III Results

Need in General



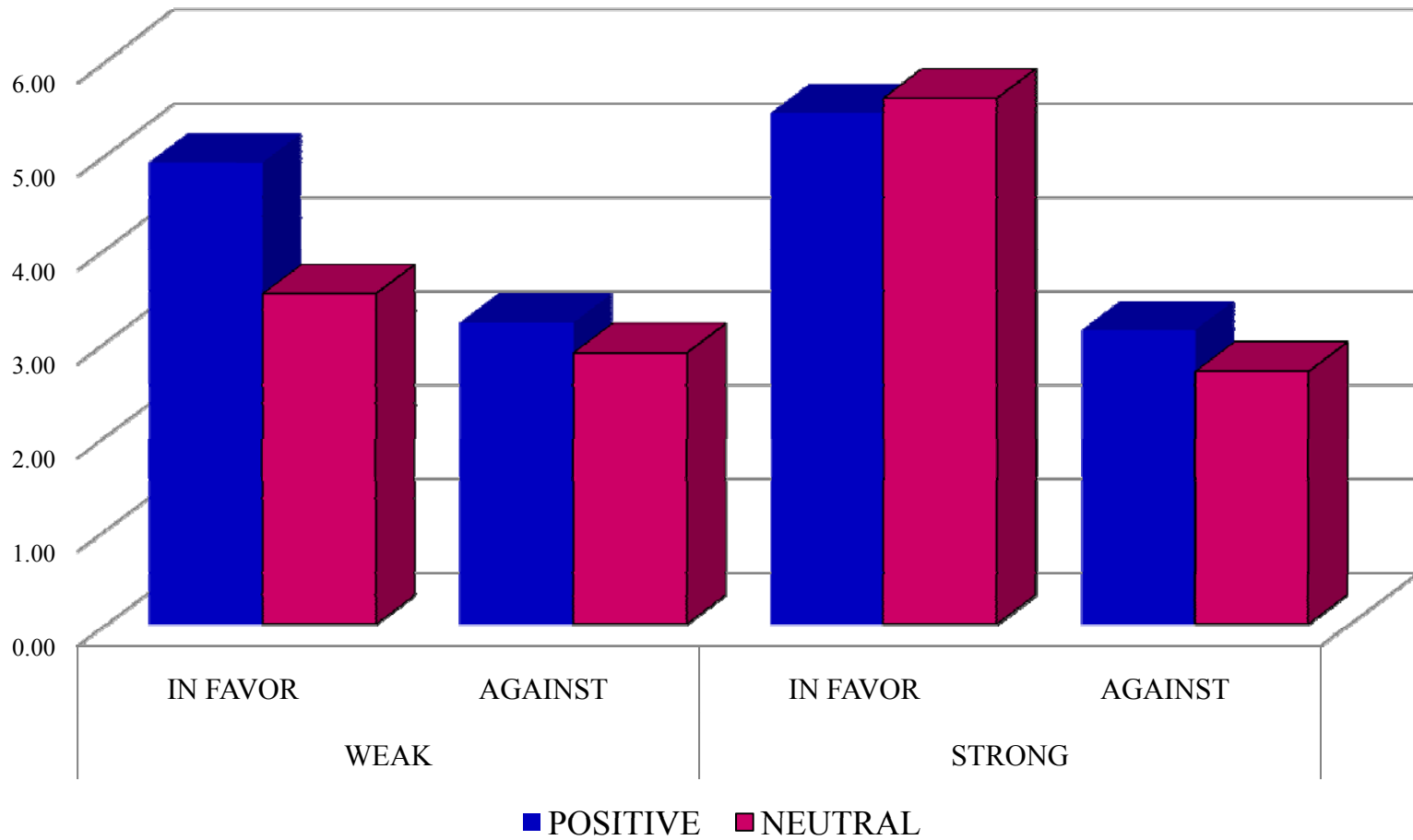
Study III Results

Total Thoughts



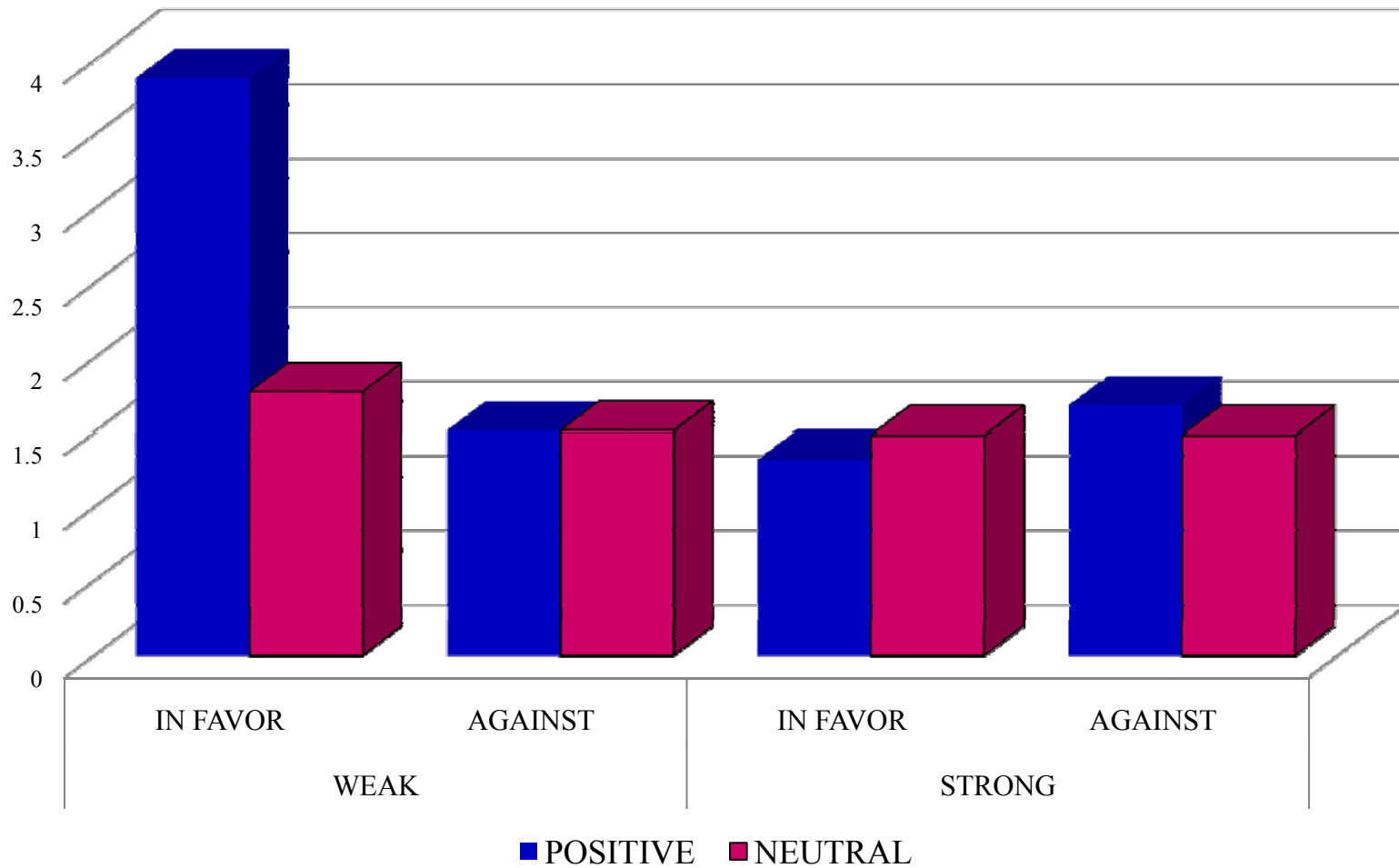
Study III Results

Need Specific



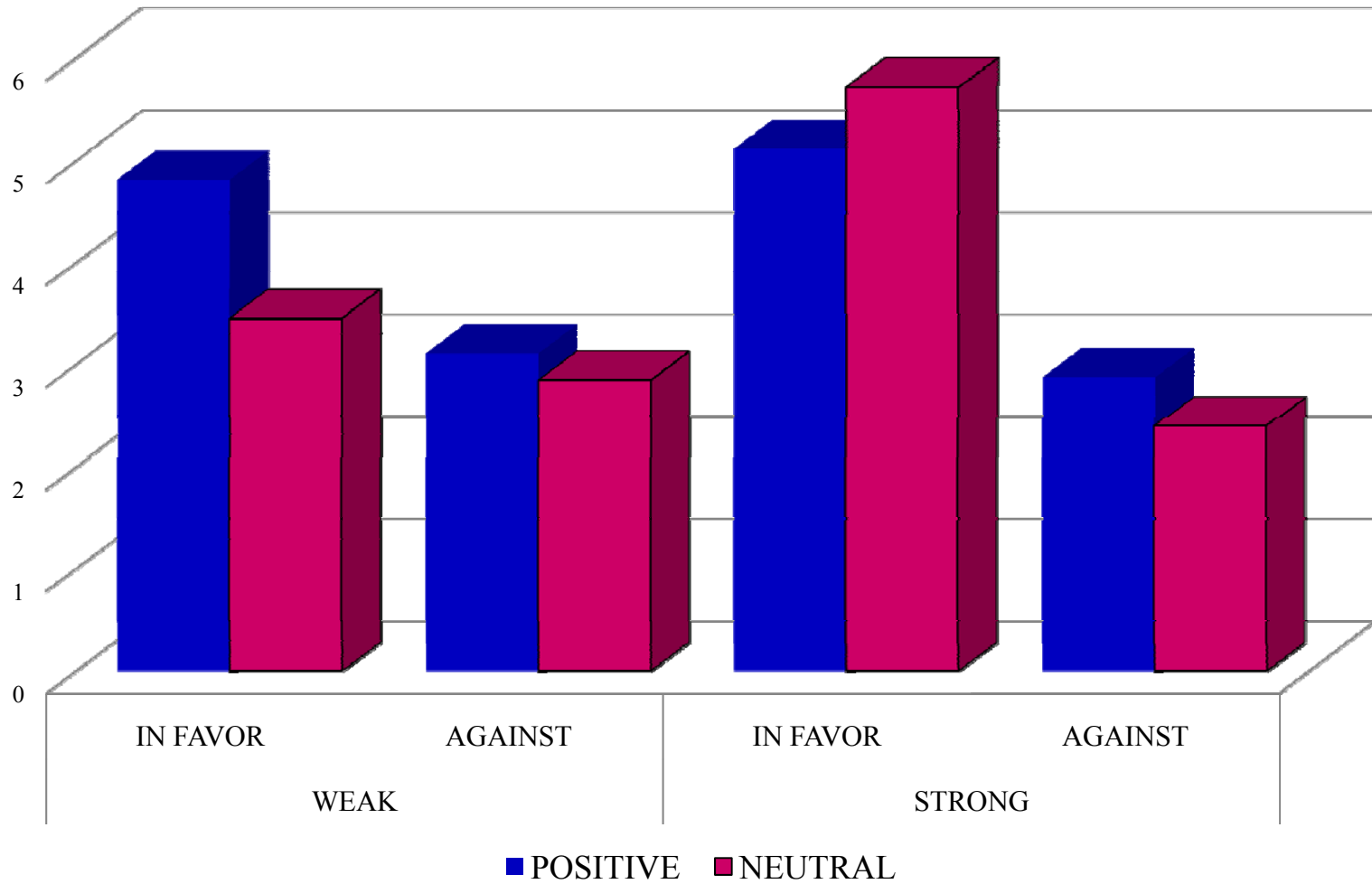
Study III Results

Reasons



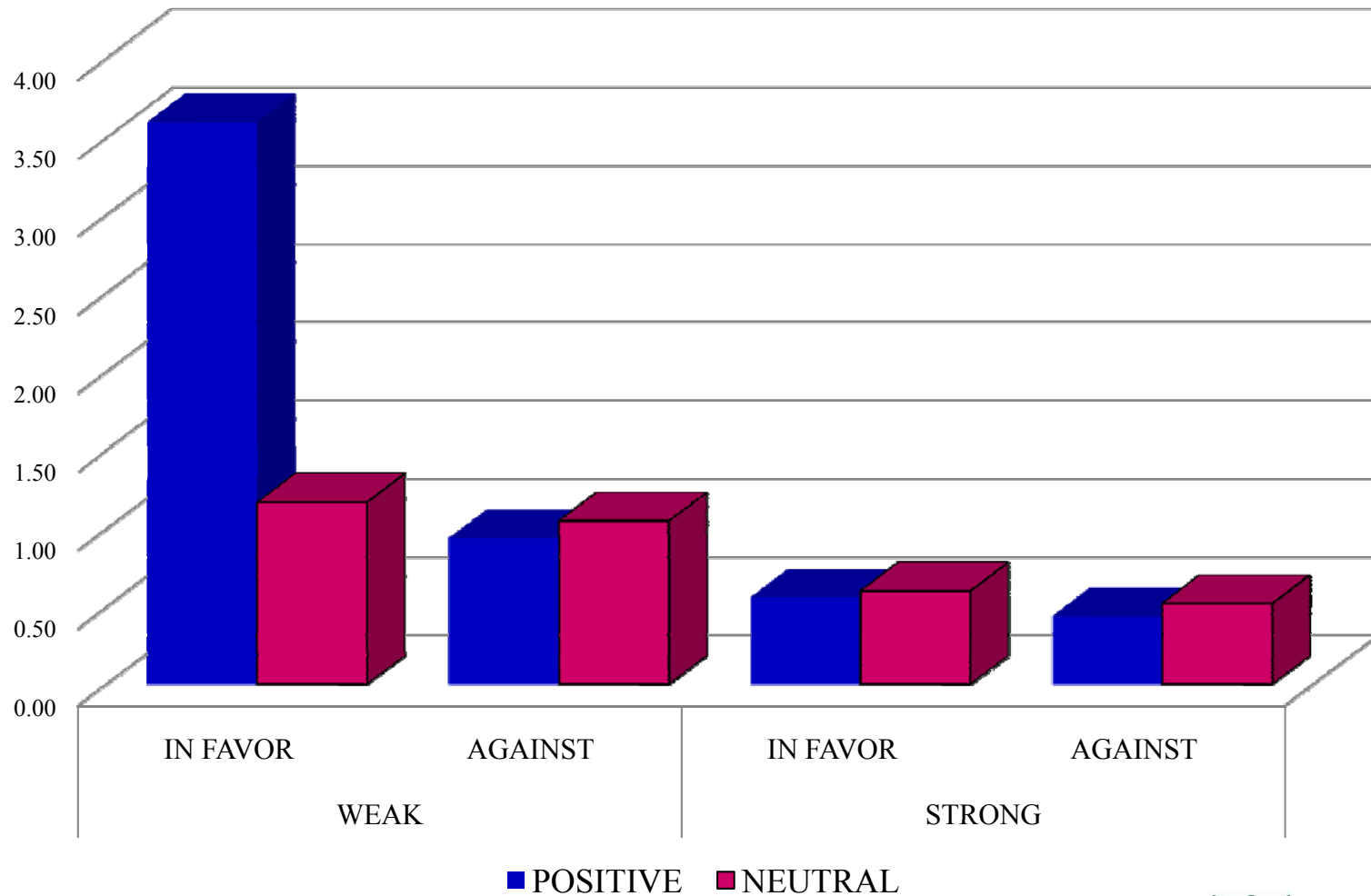
Study III Results

Implementation



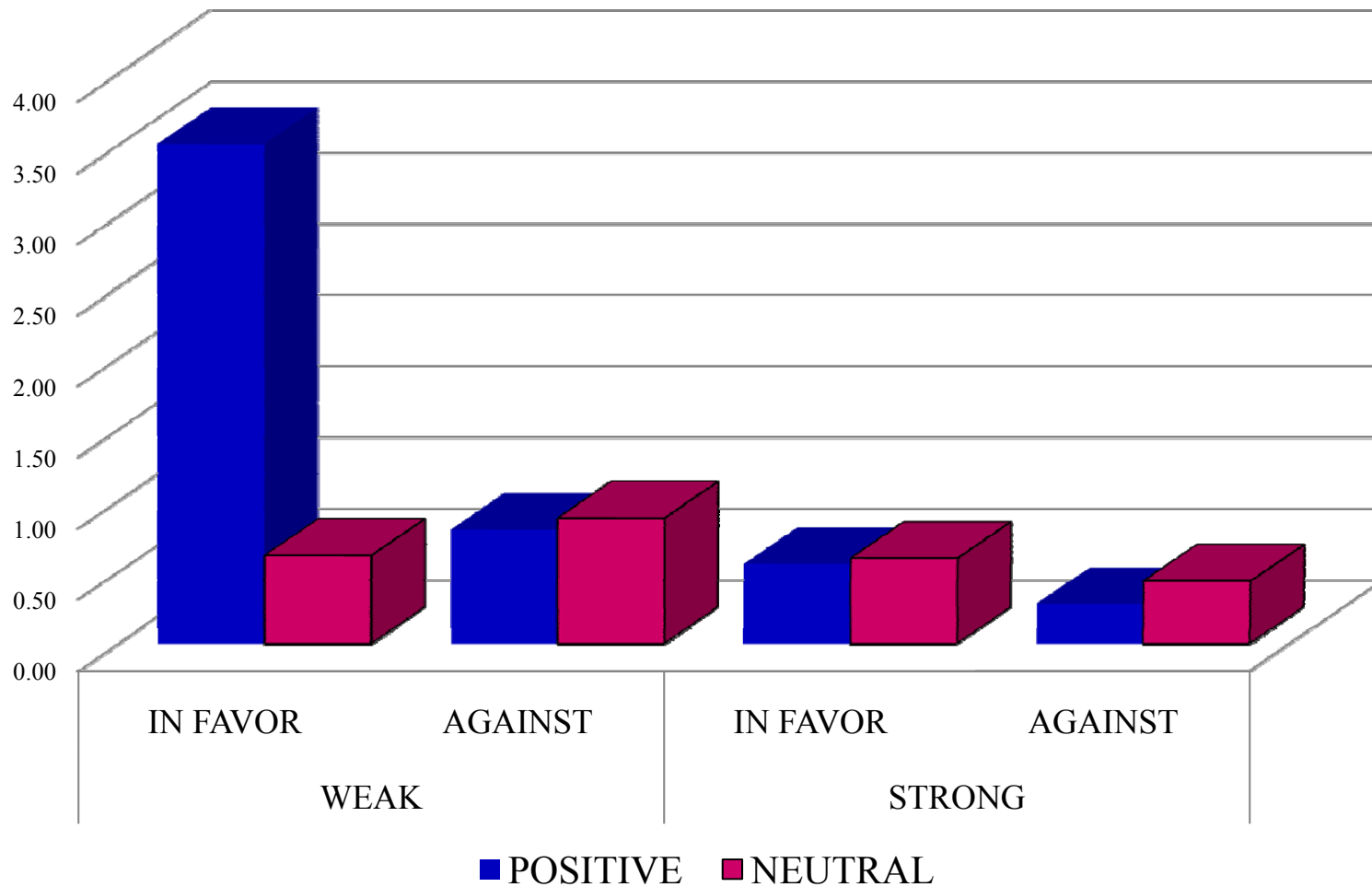
Study III Results

Novel Reasons



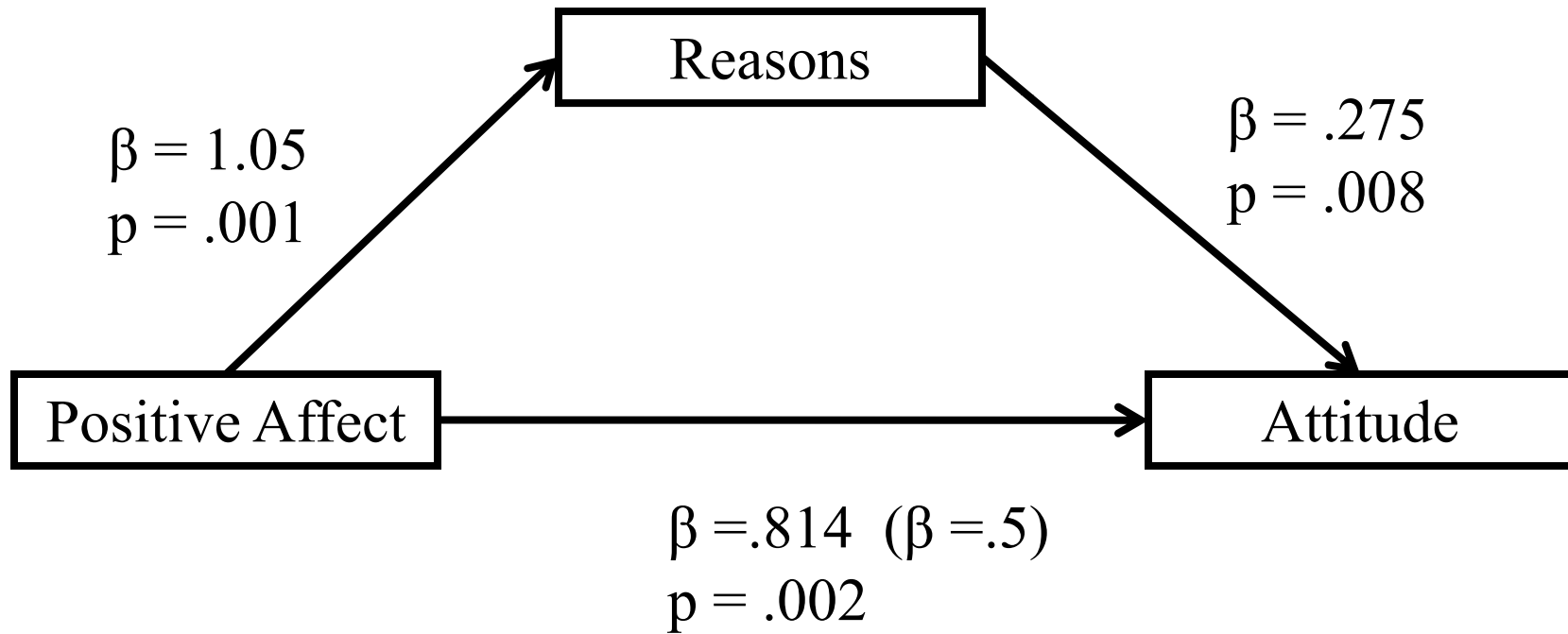
Study III Results

Symmetric Reasons



Study III Results

Mediation Analysis



Summary of Findings

- ◆ *Positive mood does not impair cognitive capacity.*
- ◆ *Participants in a positive mood appear to be strategic processors of information who judiciously decide when and how to deploy their cognitive resources.*
- ◆ *Participants' in a positive mood ability to generate additional arguments can alter the essence of communications.*



Managerial Implications

- ◆ *Advertising effectiveness*
- ◆ *Advertising testing*
- ◆ *Advertising placement*

