

Feeling good about doing good: The role of affect in responses to repeated requests for donations

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Introduction

"You helped us in the past... Would you like to help now again?..."

The main objective of this study is to examine people's behavior and motivations in repeated requests for donations, for either a similar or for a different cause.

The literature may suggest contradicting predictions:

Regulated Mechanism

- "Moral licensing"
- "Moral cleansing"

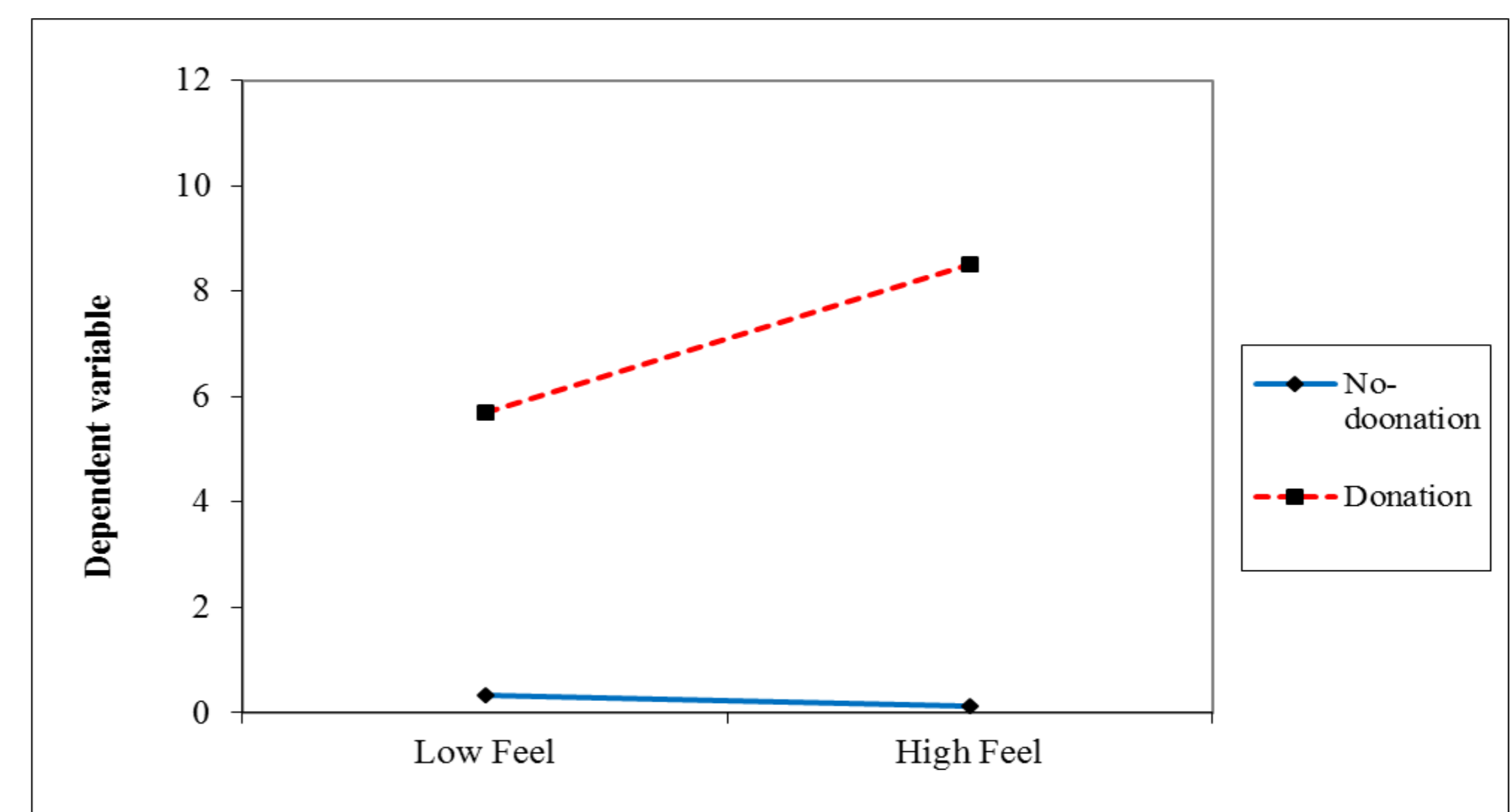
Continuous Pattern of Behavior

- "Self-consistency model"
- "Cognitive dissonance"

We suggest a new model based on the "affect-as-information" and the "affect heuristic" theories

Experiment A - After one week

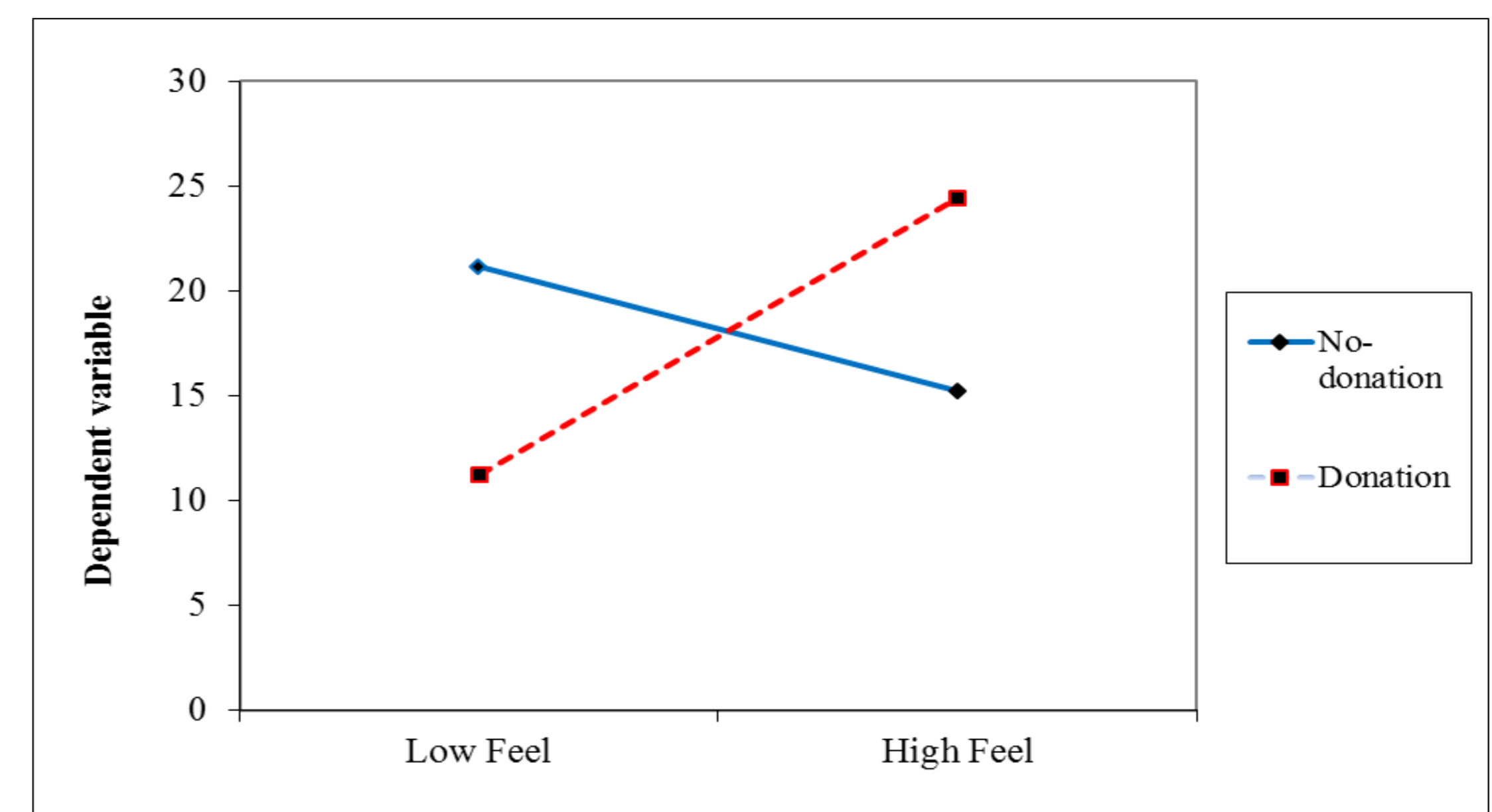
- One hundred and thirty nine students were approached at the end of a class and asked to fill a questionnaire in return for 10 NIS
- At the end of the questionnaire they had an opportunity to donate money to buy food for poor people in the city.
- A week later they were approached again and filled in another questionnaire. After completing the questionnaire, they were asked once again for a donation.
- Following each of their decisions they were asked how they felt on a scale of -3 to 3.



Mean donation on 2nd request as a function of donation at time 1 and the feelings following it.

Experiment B- Recalling a past donation

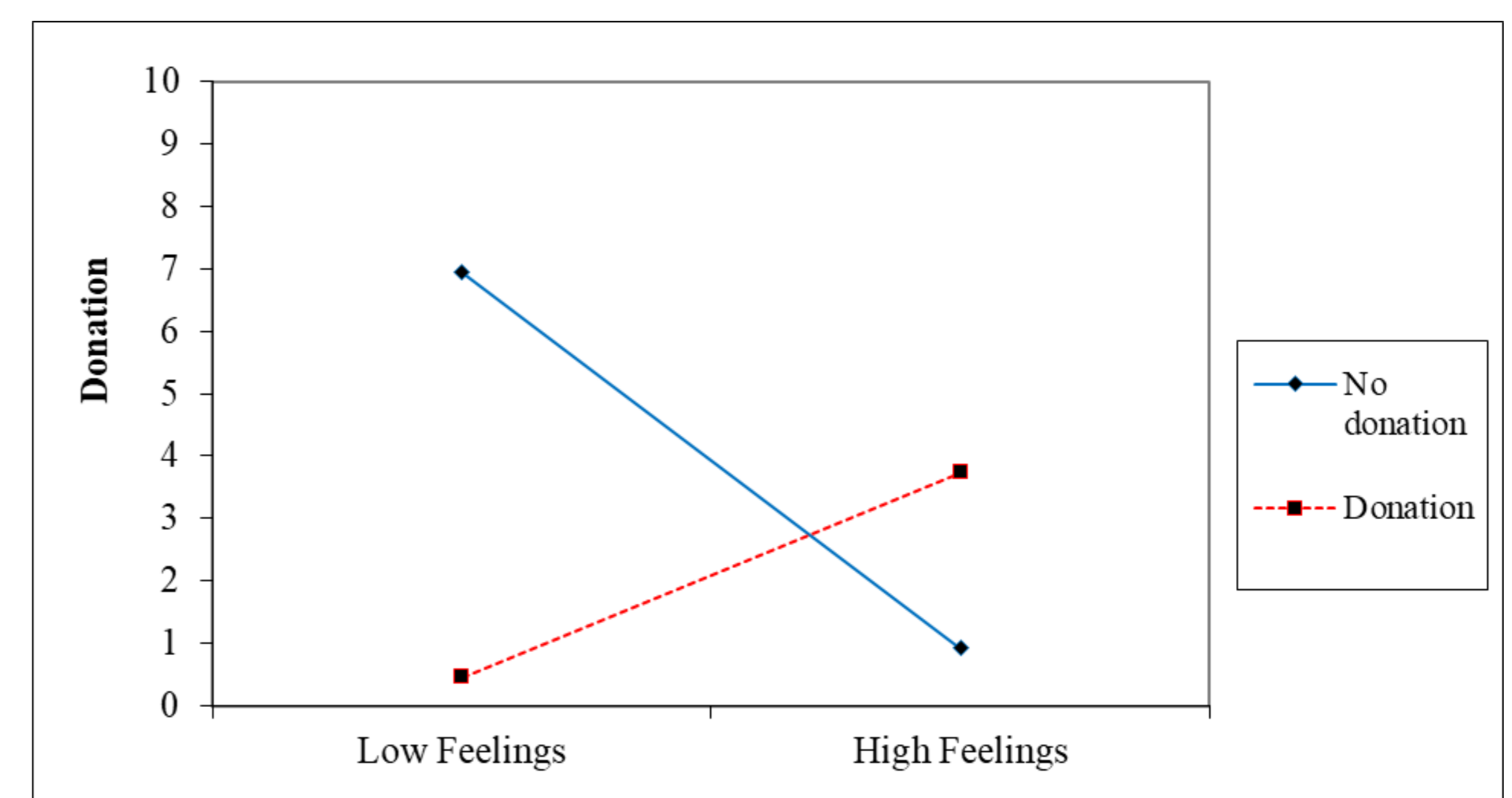
- One hundred and ninety three students were randomly assigned on an internet based questionnaire under one of two experimental conditions:
- They were asked to recall an event on which they donated/refused to donate money to a cause.
- Next, they were asked how they felt about that decision on a scale of 1 to 7.
- Participants were told that 5 participants would be randomly selected to earn a prize of 50 NIS. After completing the questionnaire, they were asked whether they would be willing to donate any amount of the 50 NIS for food for the poor in case they would receive the 50 NIS payment for participation.



Mean donation on 2nd request as a function of donation at time 1 and the feelings following it.

Experiment C- Roll the die

- One hundred and thirty nine students were invited to the lab to fill in questionnaires on interpersonal differences.
- When they approached the lab, they were explained that our lab cooperates with an association for needy people and half of them would have to donate 5 NIS based on the result (even/odd) of a die roll.
- After rolling the die and donating/not donating, they were asked how they felt on a scale of -3 to 3.
- After completing the questionnaires, participants were asked whether they would like to donate money for food/housing for the poor.



Mean donation on 2nd request as a function of donation at time 1 and the feelings following it.

Conclusions: The results show a significant interaction between donation decision at time 1 and participants' feeling that follows; such that when the general affective reaction to the initial decision is positive, people are likely to repeat the same behavior again. However, when the general affective reaction is negative, people are likely to behave in a different manner when asked for a similar donation in future events.