



How Relative Completion Impacts Mundane Experience

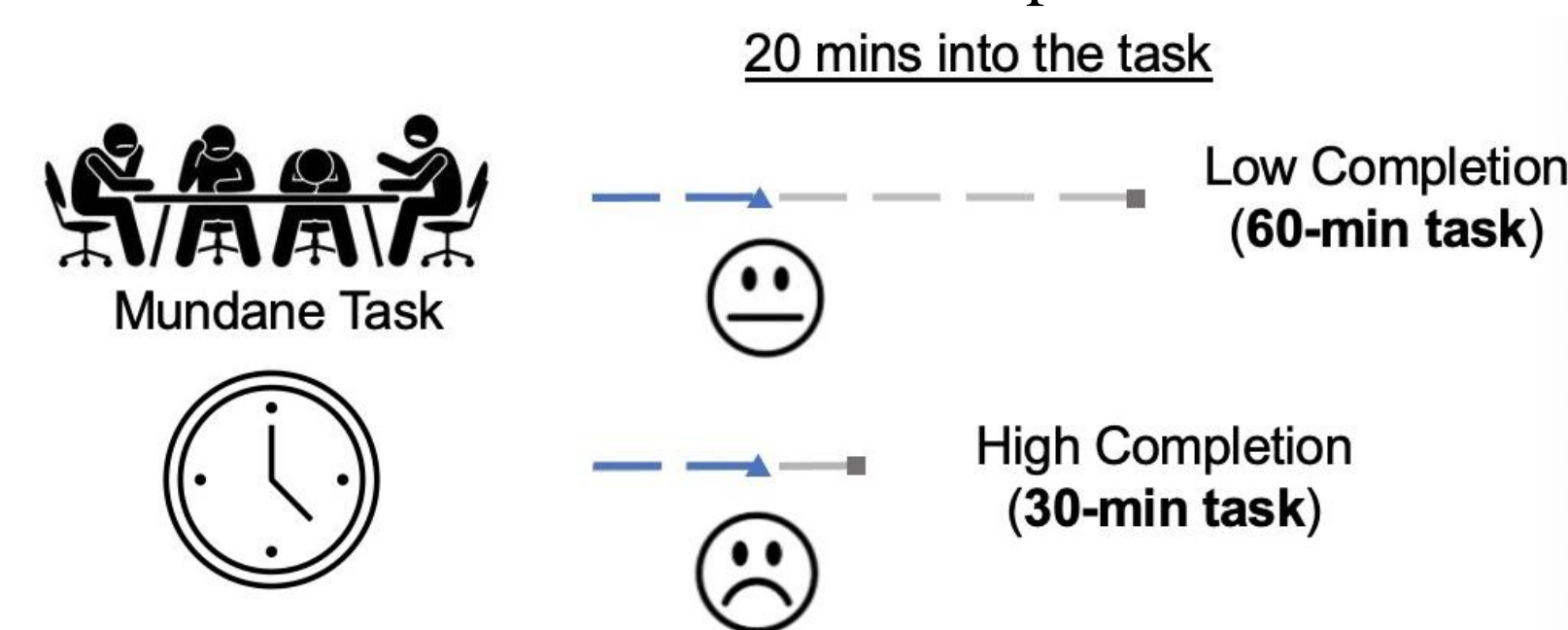
Ying Zeng¹, Claire I. Tsai², Min Zhao³, Nicole Robitaille⁴

¹ University of Colorado Boulder; ² University of Toronto; ³ Boston College; ⁴ Queen's University
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Introduction

- Mundane tasks are routine and utilitarian activities that are necessary for daily functioning but require little creative thinking and generally lack excitement. For example, people commute, attend meetings, draft reports, fill out surveys, do laundry, or pay bills as part of their everyday life.
- Despite their ubiquity and importance, mundane experiences have largely been neglected in the literature, with experimental research primarily focusing on enhancing hedonic experiences (Dunn et al., 2008; Kahneman et al., 1999; Van Boven & Gilovich, 2003; cf. Andrade & Cohen, 2007) and exploring relatively short consumption experiences consumed in a single laboratory setting.
- In the present work, we hold the stimulus value (i.e., amount of mundane task completed) constant and vary distribution information (i.e., total task amount) to demonstrate the effect of relative task completion on mundane experience. Building on the scope insensitivity literature, we predict that the same amount of mundane experience feels less aversive when relative completion is low than when it is high.



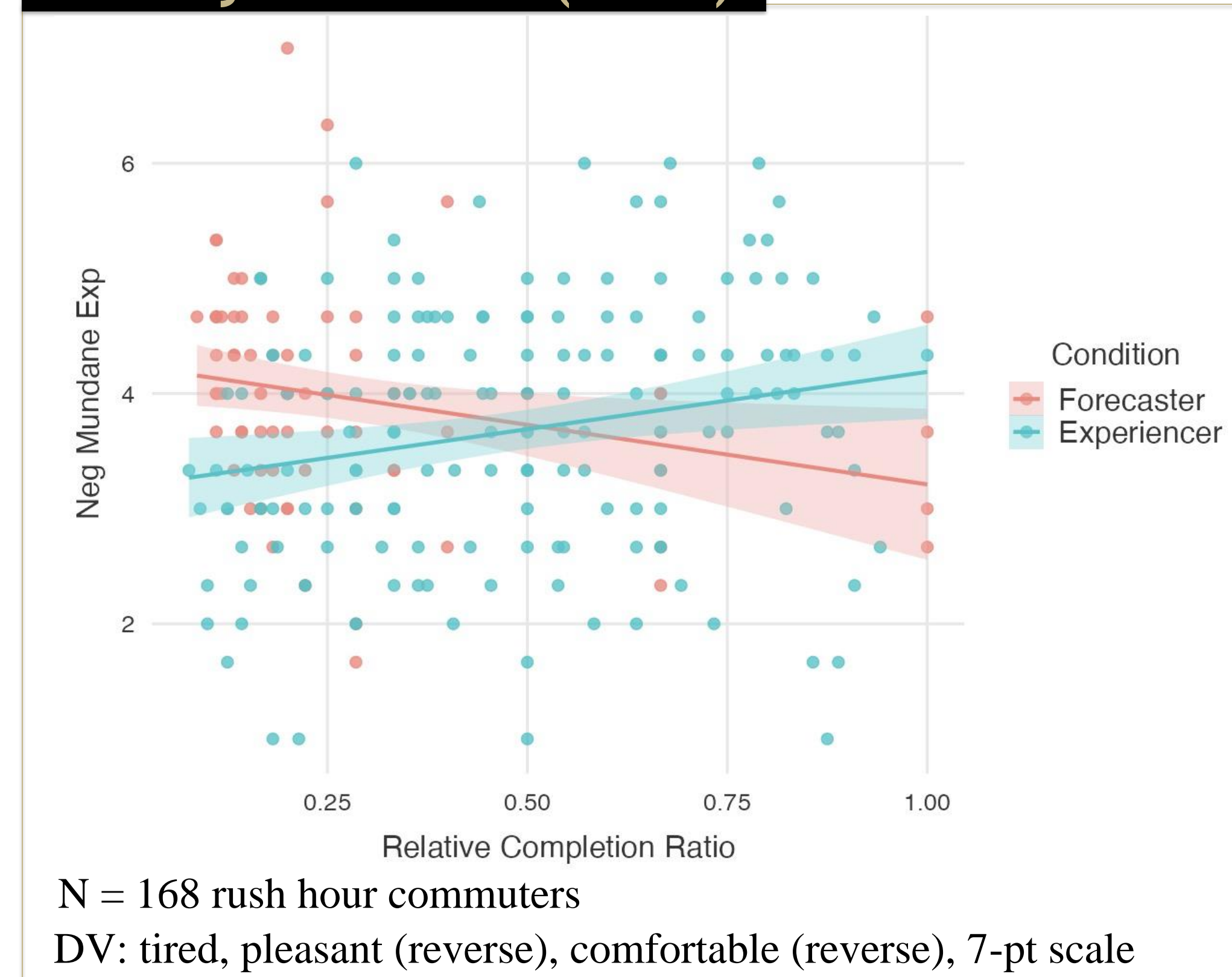
Hypotheses

- H1 (Core Effect):** Enduring the same ongoing mundane task will feel less aversive when relative task completion is lower than when it is higher.
- H2 (Ratio Sensitivity):** Lower relative task completion reduces the inferred amount endured, leading to less negative experience.
- H3 (Busyness Moderation):** Busyness attenuates the effect of relative task completion on mundane experience.

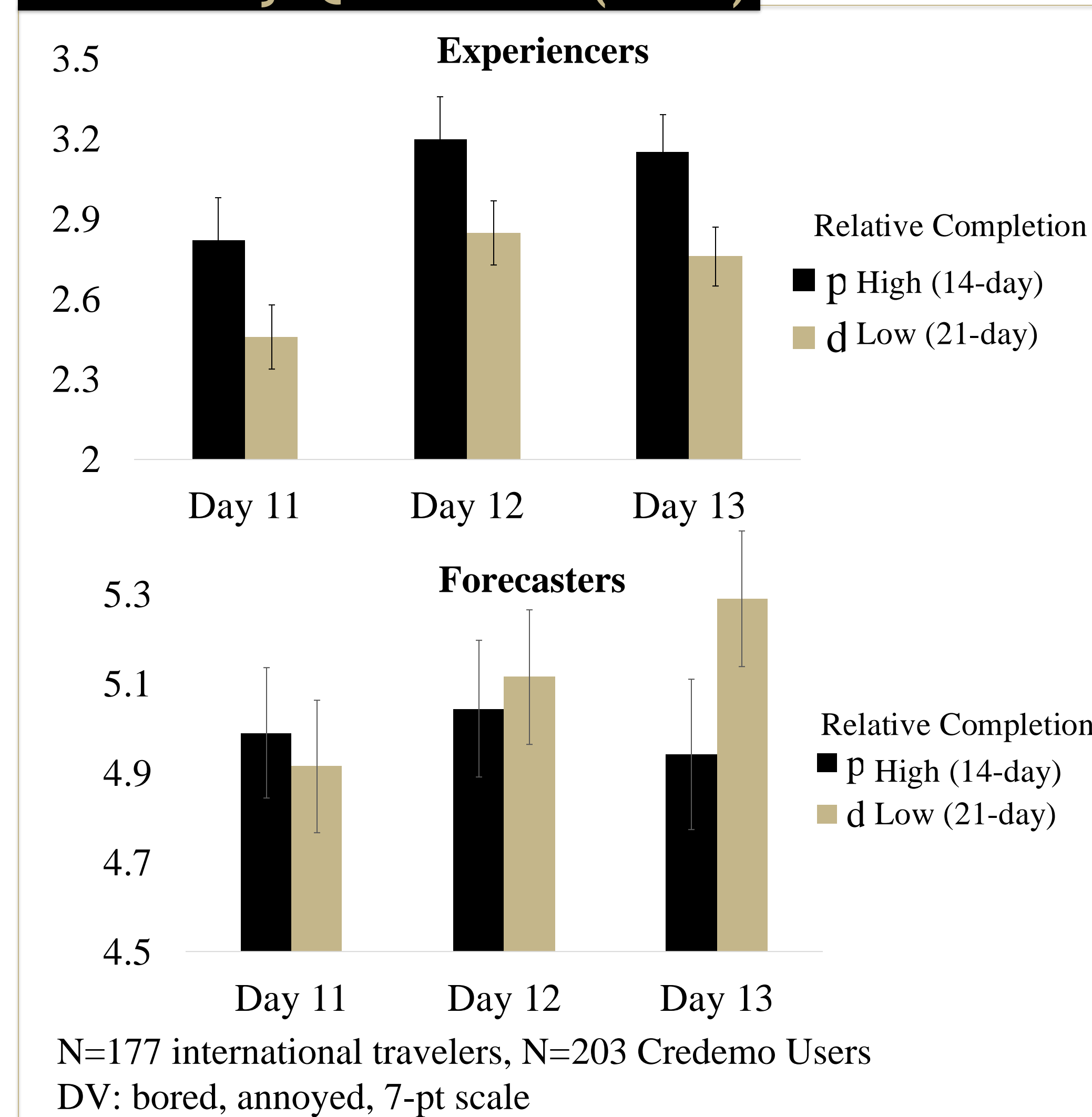
Study Overview

Study	N	Task	Design	Purpose(s) or Feature(s)
Pilot ^a	168	After-school learning program	2 (relative task completion) x 2 (role)	Initial demonstration (H1) in a field setting; ruling out response scale anchoring
S1 ^a	240	Subway commute	Relative task completion ^a x 2 (role)	Replication using a continuous measure of relative task completion (H1); ruling out response scale anchoring and preparation
S2 ^a	257	Multi-week mandatory travel quarantine	2 (relative task completion) x 2 (role)	Replication in a prolonged mundane task (H1); ruling out preparation and response scale anchoring
S3 ^a	453	Exercise tutorial experiment	2 (relative task completion) x 2 (role)	Replication in a controlled online study setting (H1); ruling out progress focus (to-go vs. to-date focus) and response scale anchoring
S4 ^a	108	Semester-long weekly assignments	2 (perceived relative task completion)	Manipulating perceived relative completion by holding total task length constant; measuring behavioral tendency (H1)
S5 ^a	447	Boring meeting simulation	3 (relative task completion)	Replication with three levels of relative completion (H1); examining ratio sensitivity as the underlying mechanism (H2), mood regulation and attention as alternative explanations
S6 ^a	311	Same as S3	2 (control vs. EOD reminder) x busyness ^a	Testing EOD reminder as a scalable intervention and busyness as a moderator, holding total task length constant (H3); measuring proposed mechanism

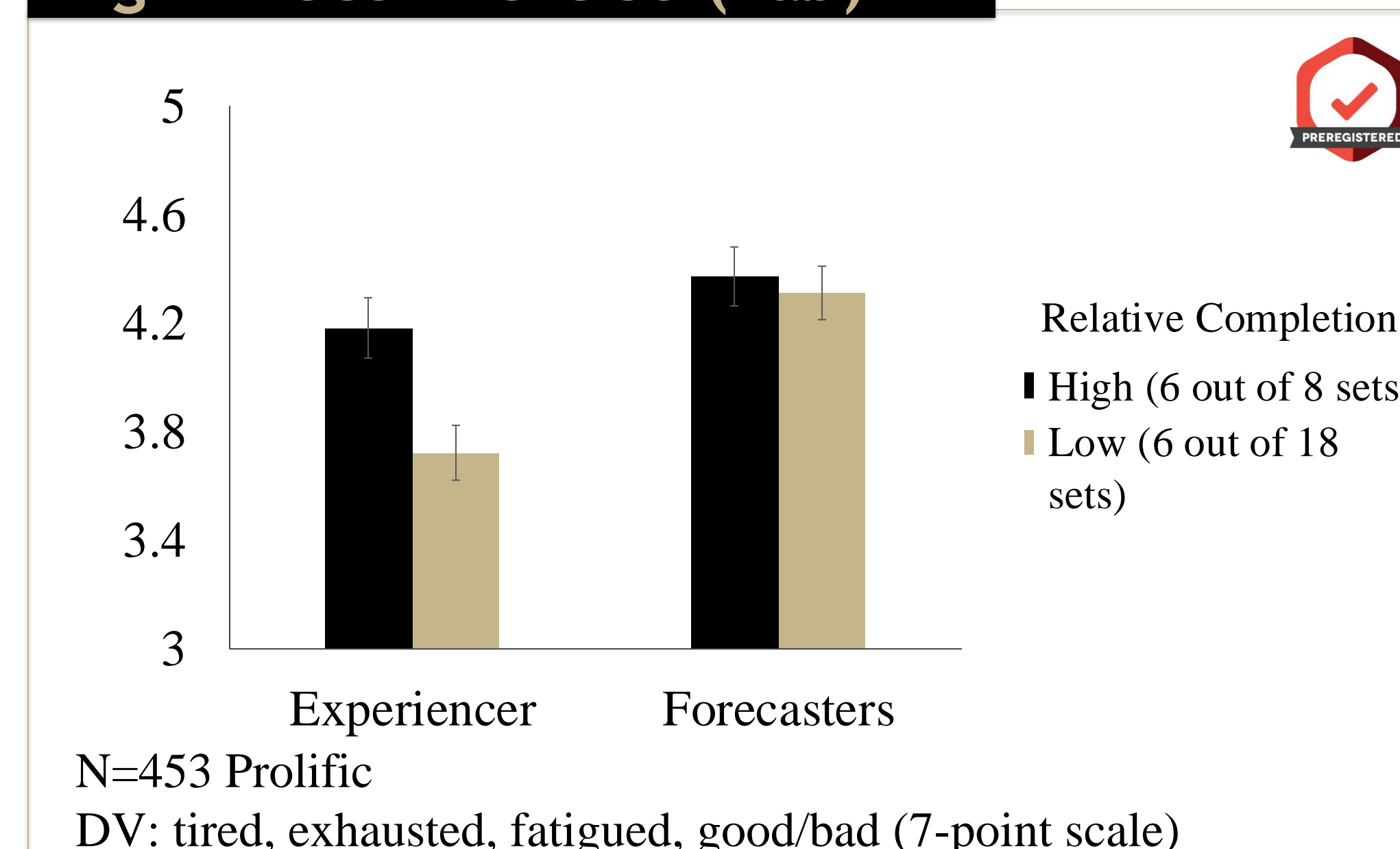
Subway Commute (Field)



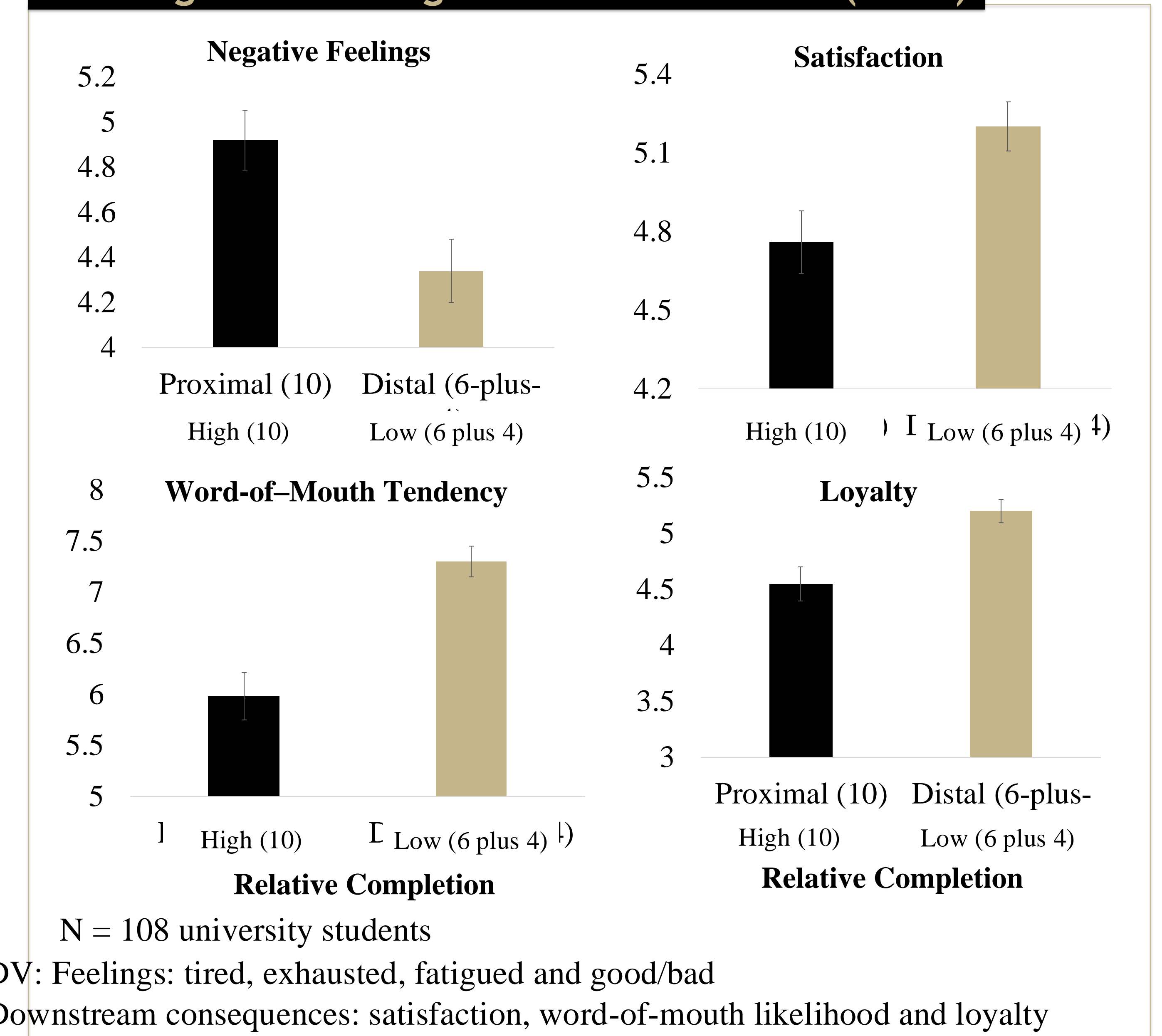
Mandatory Quarantine (Field)



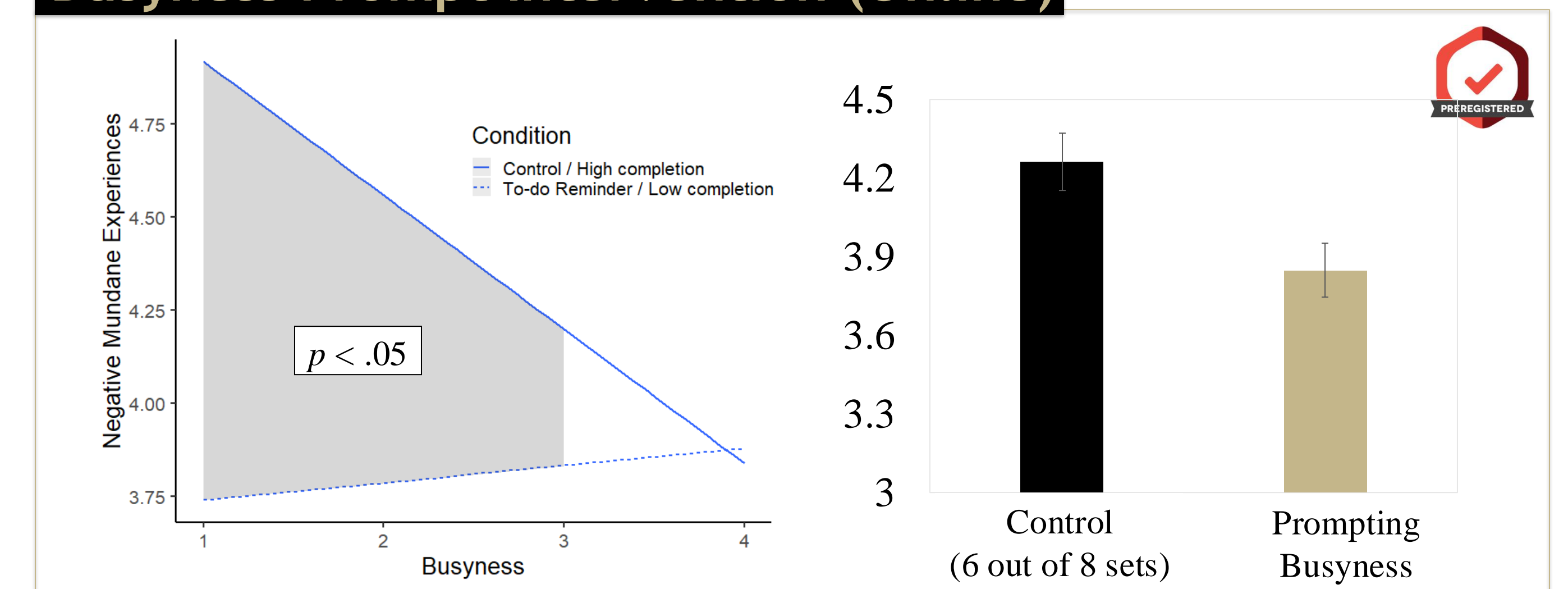
High Knees Exercise (Lab)



Framing Course Assignments - the 7th HW (Field)



Busyness Prompt Intervention (Online)



Boring Meeting Simulation and Mechanism(Online)

