How Instructor Enthusiasm influences the Effectiveness of Asynchronous Internet-Based Sales Training

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Purpose of the Study: A growing number of firms are using asynchronous online classes to disseminate information to sales employees. While instructor enthusiasm has been shown to improve student learning and motivation in traditional classrooms, previous research has not investigated instructor enthusiasm in asynchronous online classes, where instructor non-verbal behaviors are constrained and students cannot interact in real time. This is an important research gap because a key goal of sales training is to motivate sales students. Accordingly, this research examines the effect of instructor enthusiasm in asynchronous internet-based sales classes on three types of training assessments; (1) student evaluations, (2) learning retention, and (3) behavioral change intentions.

Method/Design and Sample: Current sales employees, who were recruited from an online panel, participated in a sales training webinar (n = 137) in which instructor enthusiasm was manipulated to be high or low. The sample reflects practicing sales employees engaged in ongoing education.

Results: Findings indicate that high instructor enthusiasm improves student evaluations and evokes positive behavioral change intentions. Instructor enthusiasm does not enhance learners' rote memorization of information, but significantly enhances their intention to use learned material.

Value to Marketing Educators: These findings have implications for designing effective online sales courses and demonstrate the benefits of using multiple types of training assessments to evaluate internet-based sales educators.

Keywords: Asynchronous online education, sales training, instructor enthusiasm

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Until recently, offering classes to geographically dispersed sales employees was often costly in terms of travel expense and lost selling time. Now a growing number of firms are using internet-based training classes to disseminate information to sales employees without them having to leave the field (Carswell & Kenkatesh, 2002). Powers, DeCarlo and Gupte (2010) reported that 53% of sales managers receive at least some component of internet-based training. Many internet-based educational programs are asynchronous, where the student and instructor are not located in the same classroom at the same time (Carswell & Kenkatesh, 2002). The advantage of asynchronous education is that it provides sales employees with the flexibility to learn material at their convenience. The disadvantage of asynchronous education is that it is much more difficult to facilitate a positive classroom atmosphere (Beaudoin, 1990). When students were asked to list reasons why they felt dissatisfied with e-learning, the top reasons included lack of atmosphere, inability to engage in direct interpersonal interaction, and the instructor's limited ability to answer questions (Bouhnik & Marcus, 2006). Consequently, it is important to investigate tactics for enhancing the educational atmosphere and making students feel more connected when they participate in asynchronous training.

In traditional classroom settings enthusiastic instructors have been repeatedly shown to be more effective than lackluster instructors (Day, 2004). For example, in a live-classroom experiment Patrick, Hisley, and Kempler (2000) demonstrated that instructor enthusiasm increases students' intrinsic motivation to learn. When teaching, instructors display

enthusiasm through the aggregated frequency of enthusiastic or encouraging nonverbal behaviors such as facial expressions, vocalizations, and gestures (Lee & Lim, 2010; Wheeless, Witt, Maresh, Bryand, & Schrodt, 2011). However, students perceive instructors to use fewer nonverbal behaviors in asynchronous instruction than in classroom instruction (Freitas, Myers, & Avtgis, 1998; Hutchins, 2003). Instructors cannot use a variety of nonverbal behaviors in asynchronous education such as gesturing towards a specific student, eye contact, and walking around a classroom (Freitas, Myers, & Avtgis, 1998). Furthermore, asynchronous instructors cannot witness and react to students (LaRose & Whitten, 2000). Accordingly, instructor nonverbal behaviors may sometimes be unsuitable; for example, an instructor smiling while students feel frustrated. If asynchronous instructors are not able to effectively convey appropriate emotions to students then the achievement of training objectives may suffer.

This is particularly relevant to sales employees because the objectives of sales trainings often entail more than just retention of material. According to Lassk and colleagues (2012, 141), "training must move beyond task-related knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) and focus more on a full range of salesperson competencies with a commitment to continual learning throughout salespeople's careers." Trainings are an important tool for socializing the salesforce into firm culture, particularly when salespeople spend a lot of time in the field (Dubinsky et al., 1986). Kirkpatrick (1976) proposes that training assessments include learner evaluations, knowledge retention, behavioral change, and organizational results. We argue that learner evaluations and behavioral change assess whether trainings successfully motivate and/or socialize sales employees in the field. Because asynchronous internet-based instruction restrains communication, instructor enthusiasm may have a stronger influence on some training assessments than others. Therefore, in this research, we examine the influence of instructor enthusiasm in asynchronous education on three training assessments, including (1) sales employees evaluations, (2) learning retention, and (3) behavioral change intentions.

We next review relevant literature regarding instructor enthusiasm and propose hypotheses. Then we describe the design of our experiment and test the findings using Structural Equation Modeling. Finally, we present the findings and discuss the implications for sales training and online education.

CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

Instructor enthusiasm refers to the instructor's display of excitement, interest, energy, and passion (Wheeless et al., 2011). In terms of delivery style instructors can express their enthusiasm via emotive facial expressions, eye contact, voice intonation, demonstrative gestures, and animated acceptance of ideas (Babad, 2007; Lee & Lim, 2010). In traditional classroom settings studies have demonstrated that instructor enthusiasm positively impacts outcomes such as students' intrinsic motivation (Patrick, Hisley, & Kempler, 2010), student test scores, on-task behavior, and achievements (Bettencourt, Gillett, Gall, & Hull, 1983; Brigham, Scruggs, & Mastropieri, 1992). However, while the impact of instructor enthusiasm on students' reactions in face-to-face instructions is well documented, considerably less is known about the role of instructor enthusiasm in online distance learning (Schutt, 2007). In this section, we will explore three issues regarding instructor enthusiasm in asynchronous education, (1) advancements in internet-based technologies, (2) the underlying mental processes of the instructor enthusiasm on training assessments, and (3) the relevance to sales literature.

Advancements in Internet-Based Technologies

In the past, only very low-quality audio and video recordings could be distributed via the internet prompting some researchers to argue that instructors' nonverbal behaviors were unimportant compared to verbal communications (Arbaugh, 2001; LaRose & Whitten, 2000). However, dramatic improvements in e-learning technologies have allowed for the dissemination of much better quality of videos on the internet and provided new tools for communicating online (e.g. Adobe Connect, You Tube video capture); thus, nonverbal behaviors can now be readily observed in most video recordings. Nevertheless, the fundamental constraints of asynchronous education remain the same regardless of the recording quality. For instance, instructors cannot see or react to student nonverbal behaviors, cannot make eye-contact with students, and cannot facilitate student enthusiasm during class (Freitas, Myers, & Avtgis, 1998). It is therefore not obvious how findings about the role of instructor enthusiasm in traditional classrooms would extend to online distance learning. Accordingly, Liu, Amagai, and Bricken (2012) urge further research for understanding the impact of nonverbal behaviors in internet-based education.

Underlying Mental Processes

Although instructor enthusiasm has been shown to lead to important learning outcomes in traditional classrooms, the theoretical mechanisms underlying these effects are unclear. With a few exceptions (e.g. Patrick, Hisley, & Kempler, 2000), many reported findings about the relationship between instructor enthusiasm and student learning are based on correlational rather than experimental research (Mitchell, 2013). Therefore, the causal linkage between instructor enthusiasm and student

achievements warrants further research attention. Even though instructor enthusiasm has been proposed to influence both students' emotional experience and their inferences about instructor being warm and friendly, to the best of our knowledge, we are not aware of rigorous empirical tests that simultaneously examine these affective and cognitive mechanisms.

Instructor Enthusiasm in Sales Training

The role of instructor enthusiasm has not been discussed in the context of sales training to our knowledge. This extension is meaningful because instructors' and students' emotional traits are context-specific (Goetz, Frenzel, Pekrun, & Hall, 2006; Goetz, Frenzel, Pekrun, Hall, & Ludtke, 2007). Research has shown that students' emotional expectations and experience can be different due to the subject domain. Specific to the sales context, training should motivate sales employees to continue learning throughout their careers (Lassk et al., 2012). Because instructor enthusiasm has been shown to increase the intrinsic motivation of students to learn in traditional classrooms (Patrick, Hisley, & Kempler, 2000), it is directly relevant to sales training.

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Building on prior psychology and marketing research on the role of emotional expressions in interpersonal communications and perceptions (e.g. Hareli & Hess, 2012; Tsai & Huang, 2002), we propose that instructor enthusiasm influences training outcomes through two pathways. The first is emotional contagion, in which educators' expressed enthusiasm provokes a similar affective state in students. The second is cognitive inferences, in which an instructor's enthusiasm reveals specific information about his/her goals, attitudes, and preferences. The theoretical model is shown in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1: CONCEPTUAL MODEL
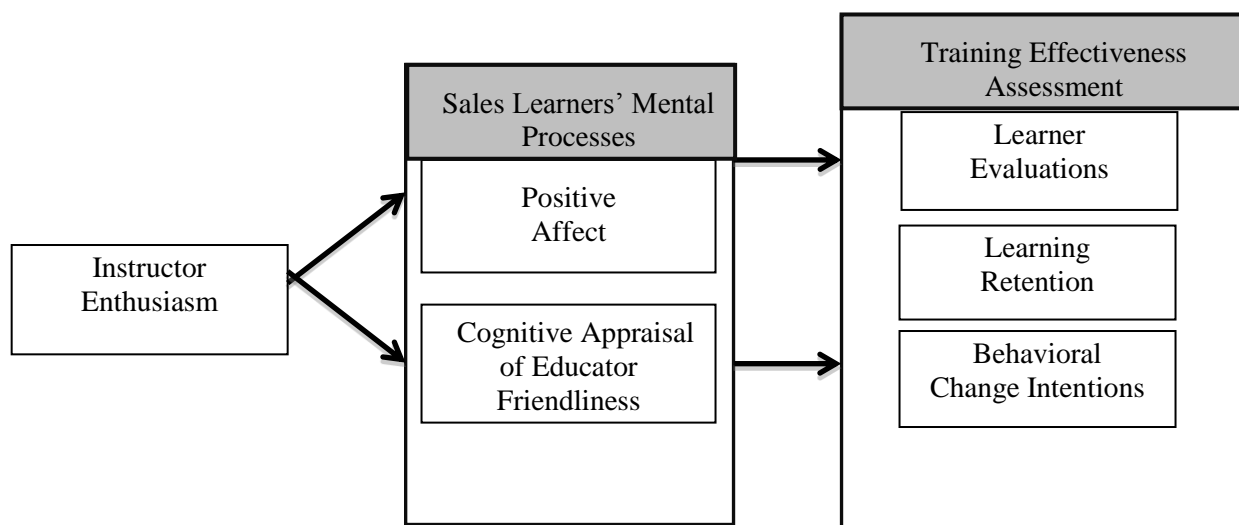
Emotional Contagion

A growing body of research in psychology and business is examining the phenomenon of emotional contagion in which intense emotional displays can prompt comparable emotions in observers (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994). On the one hand, humans mimic the nonverbal behaviors of others (e.g. facial expression, vocalizations, and body language) innately, automatically, and unconsciously (Chartrand & Bargh, 1999). In doing so the observer tends to converge emotionally via physiological feedback with the communicator (Laird & Bresler, 1992). On the other hand, learners may make conscious social comparisons, including comparison of their feeling states with the educator to determine how they should be feeling in a training session (Barsade, 2002). The emotional transition from instructors to students, in which students can acquire enthusiasm and excitement from their teachers, has been shown in the face-to-face instructional context (Patrick, Hisley, and Kempler, 2000; Frenzel, Goetz, Ludtke, Pekrun, & Sutton, 2009). Although the online medium may not be as conducive to emotional displays as live teaching, prior research has shown that emotional contagion can indeed occur in video-simulated interpersonal encounters (e.g. Luong, 2005; Lin & Lin, 2011). Extending this notion, we contend that instructor's expression of enthusiasm or excitement should elicit similar affective states in sales employees. Enthusiastic educators should increase the enthusiasm of sales employees while dreary educators should decrease enthusiasm. Accordingly, we propose:

H₁: High instructor enthusiasm leads to more positive learner affect than does low instructor enthusiasm.

Cognitive Inferences

Emotional displays also communicate rich and important information about displayers' attitudes, goals, and intentions to the observers (Fridlund, 1994). Observers tend to intuit enduring dispositions from momentary displays (Montepare & Dobish, 2003). People who display enthusiasm and excitement are often viewed as being more kind, honest, agreeable, friendly, and pleasant than less enthusiastic people (Hess, Beaupre, & Cheung, 2002; Mueser, Grau, Sussman, & Rosen, 1984). As with other types of social interactions, sales employees participating in an internet-based course should decode the instructor enthusiasm and make inferences about the educator's warmth and friendliness (Hareli & Hess, 2012). Compared to low instructor enthusiasm, high instructor enthusiasm should increase the perceived friendliness of the educator. Accordingly, we propose:

H₂: High instructor enthusiasm leads a greater perception of the educator's friendliness than does low instructor enthusiasm.

Training Assessments

Training effectiveness can be assessed using a number of methods (Noe, 1986; Tannenbaum & Yukl, 1992). Kirkpatrick (1976) explains that there are four categories of training assessment; (1) trainee evaluations, which are trainees' attitude towards a training program, (2) learning retention, which is the degree to which trainees retain specific training content, (3) behavioral change, which is the degree to which trainees' intend to use abilities and skills acquired during training on the job, and (4) organizational results, which are measures of how well a training program contributed to firm performance (e.g. productivity, company profits). In this research we focus on the first three categories because they are directly relevant to the learner. We argue that high instructor enthusiasm influences sales learners through two pathways, affective and cognitive.

Consistent with the process of emotional contagion, high instructor enthusiasm should cause sales employees to feel more positively. According to Isen, Shalker, Clark, and Karp (1978), positive affect enhances favorable evaluations. People use their affective states as evaluative information (Schwarz & Clore, 2003). In service encounters, customers' emotional experience determines their evaluative judgments of the experience (Hennig-Thurau, Groth, Paul, & Gremler, 2006). Consistent with this notion, when sales learners experience positive emotional feelings and enjoy interacting with an educator, they should evaluate the instruction more favorably. Furthermore, positive affect has been shown to enhance cognitive activities (Isen, 1999). For instance, positive feelings improve creative problem solving (e.g. Estrada, Isen, & Young, 1997), facilitate recall of neutral and positive materials, and systematically change strategies used in decision-making tasks (Ashby, Isen, & Turken, 1999, 529). We therefore argue that positive affect leads to better learning retention.

Students' positive affective experience (e.g. interest and enthusiasm) promotes their learning involvement (Ashby, Isen, & Turken, 1999), and enhances the likelihood for students to reengage in the academic content (Abrantes, Seabra, & Lages, 2007). In many cases students feel it is more important for an expected learning experience to be enjoyable and entertaining than for lecture content to be accurate and up-to-date (Cahn, 1987). Therefore, we propose that sales employees who experience more positive affect in a training process are more likely to carry that material with them into their future, return for more training sessions, and pass positive comments to friends.

H₃ₐ: Sales employees' positive affect will mediate the relationship between instructor enthusiasm and learner evaluation.

H₃ᵦ: Sales employees' positive affect will mediate the relationship between instructor enthusiasm and learning retention.

H₃ᵨ: Sales employees' positive affect will mediate the relationship between instructor enthusiasm and behavioral change intentions.

We argue that enthusiastic individuals are often perceived as being more approachable, warm, friendly, smart, and likable (Mueser et al., 1984). According to Abrantes, Seabra, & Lages (2007, 961), "Teachers should not only be transmitters of knowledge and skills but also attend to their relationships with students. Students often want to know if instructors are likeable rather than if they are knowledgeable." Instructor caring and friendliness is an important determinant of learners' ratings of instruction (e.g. Kierstead, D'Agostino, & Dill, 1988). As such, we propose that learners should feel as though friendly educators are better educators. Thus, learner evaluations should be higher. Learners are also more motivated to learn when teachers are friendly with learners, encourage learners' engagement, and help to reduce academic stress and anxiety (LeBlanc & Nguyen, 1999). Finally, research on leadership and counseling suggest that when leaders are warm and friendly, subordinates may feel higher level of acceptance of their values, and be more open to the leaders' ideas and influence (Tjosvold, 1984). Warm and friendly educators build stronger rapport with learners (Sweeney, Morrison, Jarratt, & Heffernan, 2009), and interpersonal rapport has been consistently shown to be an antecedent of behavioral outcomes (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2006; Gremler &

Gwinner, 2008). Hence, we expect educators' friendliness to enhance behavioral change intentions.

H4a: Sales employees' inference about educator friendliness will mediate the relationship between instructor enthusiasm and learner evaluation.

H4b: Sales employees' inference about educator friendliness will mediate the relationship between instructor enthusiasm and learning retention.

H4c: Sales employees' inference about educator friendliness will mediate the relationship between instructor enthusiasm and behavioral change intentions.

METHODOLOGY

For internet-based education, Hartsell and Yuen (2006) contend that short, focused videos under 15 minutes are better than a single long video because, (1) not all viewers have sufficient bandwidth to view long videos and (2) shorter videos hold the attention of viewers better than longer videos. Accordingly, for the experimental video, we developed a relatively short webinar focused on a single topic, "Hiring the Right Number of Sales People." The instructional material was based on Zoltners, Sinha and Lorimer (2009). We manipulated instructor enthusiasm, while holding constant other potentially confounding factors, such as the content of training materials, duration of the training, and other ambient conditions.

In the high instructor enthusiasm condition, the educator was told to use passionate voice intonation, positive facial expressions, and demonstrative gesturing, while in the low instructor enthusiasm condition, the educator was told to speak calmly, neither smile nor frown, and avoid gesticulating. The webinar educator was a Caucasian male in his mid-thirties who teaches both internet-based and live sales management courses at a large Mid-Atlantic university. Practice videos were taken and pretested for multiple rounds. The final versions of the videos are of the same approximate length (7 minutes). The scripts and scenes were edited to be identical across conditions.

While it is the norm to test learners on course material in a university setting, testing is far less common in continuing education. When a course is taken for credit or certification, participants are generally tested on instructional material; yet testing is routinely skipped when material is provided for self-improvement. It is possible that learners are more actively engaged in material when they know that they will be tested on it. Accordingly, participants were randomly told or not told that there would be a quiz after the webinar and that it was recommended that they take notes. There were no significant interactions between this condition and instructor enthusiasm, so active learning was included as a control variable

(coded as 0 = not told about the quiz, 1 = told about the quiz).

Sample

This research is focused on practicing sales employees engaged in on-the-job asynchronous internet-based sales training. Therefore, it was important to sample active sales employees for the study. The sampling frame included sales employees in the U.S. participating in Mechanical Turk (also called MTurk), a large online crowdsourcing marketplace. To identify practicing sales employees from other MTurk participants, we used a multi-step procedure. First, in the description of the research, we requested that only people with sales experience complete the survey. Second, near the end of the survey, we used an open-ended screening question to identify respondents who fit the sample target: "Please briefly describe the primary responsibilities of your current job position." To eliminate any incentive to lie about having sales experience, all respondents received the compensation of $0.50 cents, regardless of whether they worked in a sales job. Our definition of sales experience included any responsibilities directly related to one or more steps in the sales process proposed by Dubinsky (1980). Two raters coded the job responsibilities independently and reached an inter-rater reliability of .90, with any disagreements resolved through discussion. A total of 27 respondents did not list having job responsibilities related to the selling process. Additionally, one participant made numerous comments indicating that she did not take the survey seriously, for example, by answering the quiz saying "stupid advice" repeatedly. Thus, the final sample size was 137. The final sample included 78 males and 59 females, with an average age of 34 (minimum = 18, maximum = 70). Of this sample 72 respondents had college degrees.

Measurement Scales

Learner affect, perceived educator friendliness, learner evaluation, and behavioral change intentions were measured using Likert type scales anchored at 1 (not at all) and 5 (very much so). Learners' perception of educator's friendliness was measured by asking respondents the extent to which the instructor appeared to be friendly, warm, and kind (see Appendix). Learners' positive affect during the course was measured by a scale adapted from Hennig-Thurau et al. (2006) using three items. Learner evaluation was assessed with a three-item scale based on Ackerman and Hu (2011) and Sweeney et al. (2009). We measured learners' behavioral change intentions in this study, since one training session may not be sufficient to evoke actual behavioral change. It was assessed with a five-item scale developed for this research assessing the degree to which learners intended to continue learning about the subject, apply

the knowledge, and recommend the webinar to others. The items and their factor loadings are shown in the Appendix. Consistent with Ackerman and Hu (2011) and Dierdorff, Surface, and Brown (2010), we used an actual quiz to measure learning retention. The quiz consisted of 4 short answer questions asking respondents to recite the four steps of "right sizing" the sales force according to the webinar. The answers were graded as correct or incorrect by the webinar's instructor. The total number of correct answers (0-4) was used to assess knowledge retention.

RESULTS

Measurement Model

The χ^2 (minimum fit) for the measurement model was 272.091 (*df* = 161, *p* < .001), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) was .977, the Normed Fit Index (NFI) was .947, the Relative Fit Index (RFI) was .924 and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was .0643. Each measure of model fit conforms to recommended values; hence, the model fit appears to be strong (see Appendix). Factor loadings were higher than 0.60 indicating sufficient convergent validity. Discriminant validity was analyzed using the test

recommended by Bagozzi, Yi, and Phillips (1991), which assesses the significance of the difference between a constrained model and an unconstrained model. Significant differences existed between all pairs of constructs indicating good discriminant validity. The composite reliabilities and Cronbach's alpha were all over the recommended level of .70 for each construct. Hence, the psychometric properties of the scales appear to be adequate.

Direct Model

The path model χ^2 (minimum fit) was 286.339 (df = 93, p < .01), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) was .915, the Normed Fit Index (NFI) was .881, the Relative fit index (RFI) was .846, and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was .0961. The CFI was above the recommended value of .90; however RMSEA fell above the recommended value of .08, and NFI and RFI was slightly below .90. Hence, the path model fit of the direct model was weak. Next, we included the mediating variables, respondent positive affect and perception of instructor friendliness. Table 1 shows the direct and mediating models.

TABLE 1: STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELS

	IV		DV	Direct		Mediated	
				SRW	T-value	SRW	T-value
1	Enthusiasm	->	Positive affect	---	---	.197	2.238[*]
2	Enthusiasm	->	Perceived friendliness	---	---	.357	4.133[***]
3	Positive affect	->	Student evaluation	---	---	.444	6.129[***]
4	Positive affect	->	Learning	---	---	-.038	-0.427
5	Positive affect	->	Behavior	---	---	.519	5.249[***]
6	Perceived friendliness	->	Student evaluation	---	---	.498	6.539[***]
7	Perceived friendliness	->	Learning	---	---	.037	0.396
8	Perceived friendliness	->	Behavior	---	---	.468	4.847[***]
9	Enthusiasm	->	Student evaluation	.289	3.347[**]	.046	0.651
10	Enthusiasm	->	Learning	.108	1.267	.102	1.096
11	Enthusiasm	->	Behavior	.209	2.302[*]	-.041	-0.549

Notes: SRW = standardized regression weight. Affect = positive learner affect, Friendly = perceived educator friendliness, Behavior = future behavioral change, Enthusiasm = instructor enthusiasm (0 = low, 1 = high), Informed = participants informed that there would be a quiz (no = 0, yes = 1). Control variables include note-taking condition, respondent gender, respondent age, education level, and first language.
[*] *p* < .05. [**] *p* < .01. [***] *p* < .001.

Mediating Model

The path model χ^2 (minimum fit) was 402.462 (df = 190, p < .01), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) was .957, the Normed Fit Index (NFI) was .922, the

Relative fit index (RFI) was .905, and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was .0789. The CFI, NFI, and RFI were all above the recommended value of .90 and RMSEA was below the

recommended value of .08; hence, the mediating model's fit was much stronger than the direct model's fit. The results in mediating model again supported H1 and H2. The mediation hypotheses were tested using the Baron and Kenny (1988) technique. In the direct model instructor enthusiasm was positively and significantly related to student evaluations (SRW = .289, p < .01) and behavioral change intentions (SRW = .209, p < .05) but not learning retention. In the mediating model, instructor enthusiasm was significantly related to both affect (SRW = .197, p < .05) and cognitive appraisal of instructor friendliness (SRW = .357, p < .001). When the mediators were added, instructor enthusiasm was no longer significantly related to student evaluations or behavioral change intentions. However, student affect was related to student evaluation (SRW = .444, p < .001) and behavioral change intentions (SRW = .519, p < .001), and perceived instructor friendliness was related to student evaluation (SRW = .498, p < .001) and behavioral change intentions (SRW = .468, p < .001). Hence H3a, H3c, H4a and H4c are supported but not H3b and H4b.

DISCUSSION

Palloff and Pratt (2002, 12) explain that, "Teaching online requires a new approach to pedagogy. The online re-creation of the face-to-face classroom can be a dismal failure for both faculty and students." They also argue that one reason why traditional lectures fail to translate to internet-based training is that lectures are often boring. However, the evidence from our study suggests that, (1) high instructor enthusiasm in asynchronous internet-based education enhances learner evaluations and behavioral change intentions, (2) instructors should be evaluated using multiple types of training assessments, and (3) instructor enthusiasm influences learning outcomes through both affective and cognitive pathways.

First, the results indicate that high instructor enthusiasm has a positive influence on learner evaluations and on behavioral change intentions in an asynchronous internet-based course. Contrary to the predictions of neuropsychologists that positive affect influences long-term memory and working memory (Ashby et al., 1999) high instructor enthusiasm does not increase the learner's memorization of material. Yet even if high instructor enthusiasm does not cause learners to memorize more details about material, it does inspire them to use material that they did learn. Thus passionate online educators motivate sales employees to apply training material to their job while less passionate educators decrease the likelihood that material will be applied. Given that sales training is only valuable if sales employees are actually willing to use it on the job, instructor enthusiasm appears to play an important role in successfully implementing online training material.

Second, training designers should use multiple types of training assessments to evaluate educators. It is not uncommon for student evaluations to be the only form of educator evaluation (Morgan & Casper, 2000; Sitzmann, Brown, Casper, Ely, & Zimmerman, 2008). However, evaluations are particularly influenced by instructor enthusiasm. Issues that inhibit enthusiastic expressions, reduce sales employee affect (such as interruptions), or cause educators to appear unfriendly, are likely to unduly reduce those evaluations—even if learners learn the material well. On the other hand, high instructor enthusiasm could result in high learner evaluations, without sales employees actually learning the training material. Therefore, we highly recommend using multiple types of evaluations when assessing training effectiveness.

Third, we investigate the underlying mental mechanisms for how instructor enthusiasm influences student learning outcomes. While previous research has shown that instructor enthusiasm positively benefits a number of student learning outcomes (Mitchell, 2013), it is unclear how to use those earlier findings for course design. By showing that instructor enthusiasm influences learning outcomes through both affective and cognitive pathways, our research findings have direct implications for the design of the asynchronous courses. For example, the pathway to improving behavioral change and student evaluations is mediated by student mood. Any design feature that detracts from mood, such as a technical issue that causes students to feel frustrated, would interfere with the benefits of instructor enthusiasm. The mediating effect of educator friendliness is interesting. Participants in our study lacked the ability to ask questions during the video training. Thus, the educator's perceived friendliness can influence learner evaluations, even without learners actually seeking help. A halo effect could spread from educator friendliness to learner evaluations; that is, sales employees might prefer friendly educators and rate them better, even when friendly educators do not provide any additional assistance.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This study does have some limitations which should be explored in further research. First, our sample might be more accepting of online training than average sales employees. In order for sales staff to participate in remote online training sessions, they must be at least somewhat familiar with technology. An advantage of using sales staff from MTurk is that they have sufficient technological competence to participate in a remote online training session. However, MTurk members may also enjoy using technology more than sales staff, even if their technological competence was similar. Extending

research by Mallin, Jones, and Cordell (2010), future research should investigate whether our model is moderated by technological acceptance. Additionally, we did not compare the reaction of sales employees from different industries or with different job responsibilities. Further research is needed to determine whether sales employees of certain industries or with certain job responsibilities react more or less strongly to instructor enthusiasm. It is also possible that sales employees who have never done sales trainings via the internet react differently than sales employees who are more experienced at internet-based trainings.

We also focused solely on asynchronous education. Thus, we were not able to investigate whether instructor enthusiasm stimulates learner communication and questions in synchronous online education. This is relevant because learner engagement might indirectly enhance learning retention. Therefore, future research should further investigate the role of high instructor enthusiasm in synchronous versus asynchronous delivery. It would also be interesting to compare the role of instructor enthusiasm in face-to-face and internet-based education. Finally, the webinar that we developed was relatively short (seven minutes). While the extant trend for internet-based training is to keep video segments short and focused on a specific point, it is not uncommon for training videos to be considerably longer than our experimental webinar, particularly for videos recorded on DVD/videotape and/or shown at the firm's physical location. Future research should investigate the influence of instructor enthusiasm in longer training videos, as well.

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Construct		Item	Ld[1]	CR	AVE	Alpha
Learner positive affect		Please indicate the extent to which the following emotions best describe how you feel after viewing this webinar: (1=not at all, 7=very much so)				
	1	Energetic	0.91	0.93	0.82	0.88
	2	Enthusiastic	0.93			
	3	Excited	0.89			
Perceived friendliness		Please let us know more specifically what you think about the EDUCATOR featured in the video. (1=not at all, 7=very much so)				
	1	Friendly	0.92	0.94	0.84	0.88
	2	Warm	0.92			
	3	Kind	0.91			
Learner evaluations		Please indicate what you think about the class. This webinar seems to be: (1 - 7)				
	1	Unfavorable/Favorable	0.91	0.96	0.86	0.88
	2	Negative/Positive	0.90			
	3	Bad/Good	0.94			
	4	Dislike/Like	0.96			
Behavioral Change Intentions	1	If you were a sales manager, and you needed to hire more people, how likely would you be follow the advice given in the webinar? (1 = Very Unlikely -7 - Very Likely)	0.62	0.89	0.63	0.91
	2	If there was another webinar in the series "Best Practices in Sales Management" that was relevant to your career, how likely would you be to watch it? (1 = Very Unlikely -7 - Very Likely)	0.82			
	3	I would participate in this sales webinar if it was available. (1 = Strongly Disagree -7 - Strongly Agree)	0.93			
	4	I would like to learn more about this topic. (1 = Strongly Disagree -7 - Strongly Agree)	0.69			
	5	I would recommend this webinar to others. (1 = Strongly Disagree -7 - Strongly Agree)	0.88			

[1]Ld = Standardized Loadings