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# Starving for Affiliation? Not if I don't know you!

## The Effects of Hunger on Desire to Affiliate

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### INTRODUCTION

• Hunger is a unique motivational state that affects our thinking and actions whether they be through conscious thought or even subconscious thought. For example, hunger causes.

- Increased support for social welfare (Petersen et al., 2014)

- Increased desire for money (Briers et al., 2006)

- Reduced focus on anything not food related until we fulfill this desire (Brendl, Markman, Messner, 2003)

• From an evolutionary standpoint, hunger should be an approach motivator, leading people to venture out and look for food.

• There are two broad sources of people with whom this approach can be focused

- Existing Relationships and New Relationships

- Hunger might increase people's desire to affiliate and seek new people to talk to, but new others are a potential threat and hunger is a threat state.

• Here, using a newly developed scale called the State Desire for Affiliation Scale, we examine how state hunger impacts our desire for affiliation.

### STUDY HYPOTHESIS

- It was predicted that being hungry would increase the desire to affiliate with new people, and that being hunger satiated would decrease your desire to affiliate with new or existing people.

### METHODS

#### Participants

- 59 participants (18 Males, 41 Females) were recruited through the Penn State Abington Participant Pool using the SONA system in exchange for 0.5 credits toward their class requirements.

- The average age was approximately 20.47 (M = 1.69, SD = .46).

#### Procedure

- Participants were asked to fast for at least 4 hours before the study began. This was listed on the prerequisites for the study and also asked during the questionnaire in the actual study.

- Prior to arrival, we used the microwave in lab rooms 236B and 236E to cook popcorn and permeate the office with the smell of popcorn.

- We then set up cups of popcorn for each condition.

- The first condition were for people who would be Hunger Satiated during the study (i.e., they would be able to eat while participating).

- The second condition were for people who would be hunger satiated after the study was over. The participants in the second condition were offered a cup of popcorn after the study was finished.

- In order to maximize our manipulation for the post-hunger satiated condition, lab researchers hid an actual bag of popped popcorn inside a cabinet in room 236E. The cabinet door would be opened slightly, to obscure the popcorn from view but still allowing the smell of popcorn to be constant throughout that particular room.

- Once the participants were seated in their respective rooms they were able to start the online portion of the study where they completed the State Desire for Affiliation Scale and demographic questions.

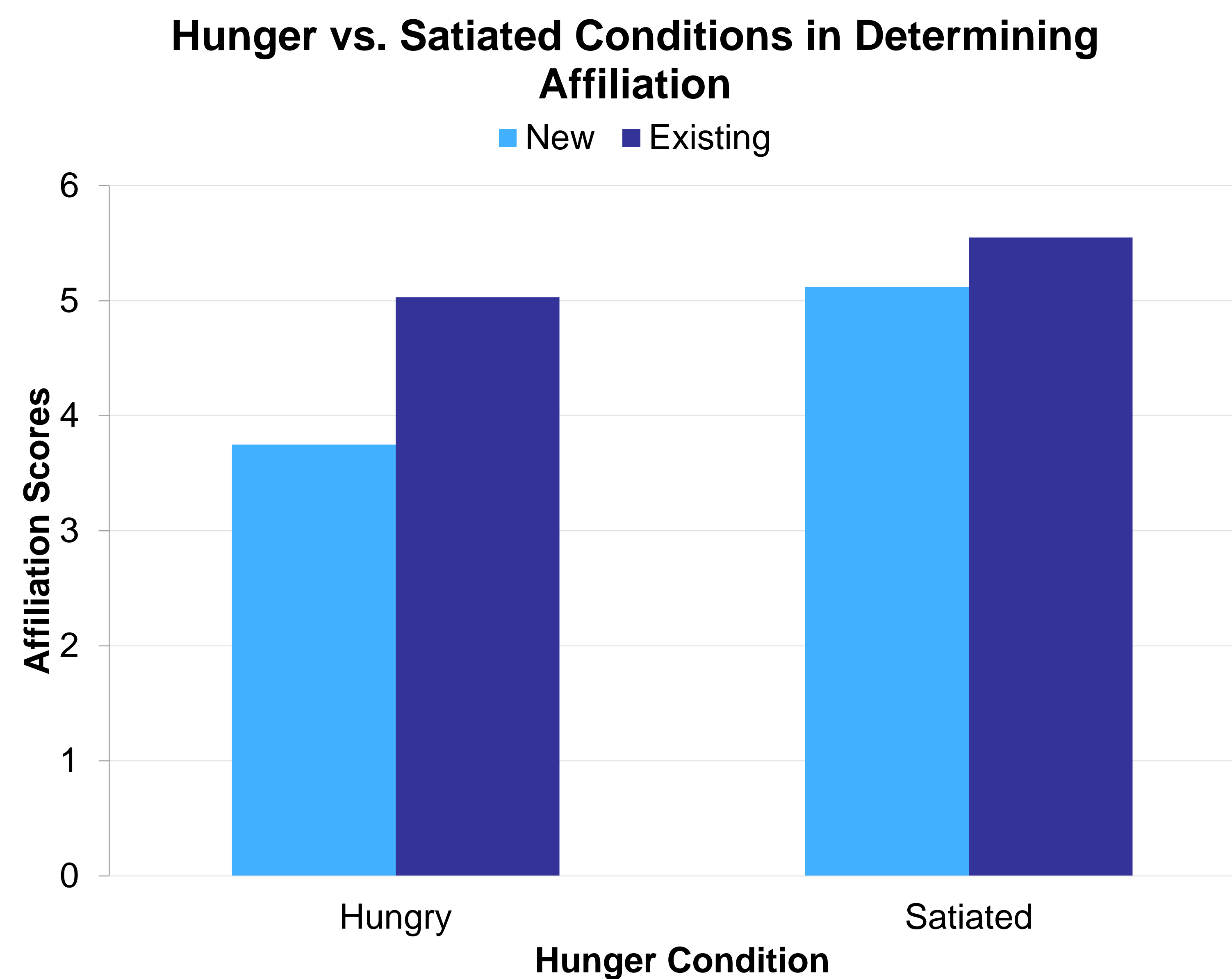
- The scale has 10 items answered on a 1-7 Likert scale (1 being a Strongly Disagree and 7 being a Strongly Agree)

- It has two subscales, one assessing State Desire to Affiliate with Existing Social Relationships and one assessing State Desire to Affiliate with New Social Relationships

- Example items include, "Right now, I'd like to meet new people," and "Right now, I'd like to be around friends and/or family."

### RESULTS

- We conducted a 2 Hunger Condition (Hungry, Satiated) x 2 Affiliation Target (New, Existing) mixed model ANOVA with repeated measures on the second factor. This yielded a significant interaction,  $F(1,55)=9.89$ .  $p=.003$ .



- Simple effects analysis revealed that in both conditions (Hungry and Satiated), people showed a preference for affiliating with Existing relative to New Social Targets ( $p<.01$ ). This is consistent with prior work using the scale.

- Further, while Desire to Affiliate with Existing Relationships did not differ between conditions ( $p>.05$ ), Hungry participants were less interesting in affiliating with new targets than were Satiated participants ( $p=.001$ ).

### DISCUSSION

- The results we obtained from this study were significant. Our results showed that people who are hungry actually prefer choosing existing friendships over searching for new relationships. People who are hunger satiated chose new relationships over existing ones as well.

- There could be many factors as to why being in a hunger state makes us more likely to choose existing friendships over new ones. Here are some possible reasons based on our readings and data.

- People that you already know and have connections with are a safer source for getting food than people you don't know.

- You're more likely focused on getting food rather than trying to affiliate with others.

- Making social connections with new individuals isn't a guaranteed source of getting food.

- There were a few areas to improve on the study, for example we only have the participants word that they did not fast for 4 hours. We have no idea whether or not they actually did in fact fast. Most, if not all, of the participants in the pre-hunger satiated condition ate the cup of popcorn they were provided. The same goes with the post-hunger satiated participants, but there were a few amount of people in both conditions that didn't seem interested in the popcorn.

- This could be just because they didn't want any popcorn or that they just don't like popcorn. We cant tell for sure exactly on these few participants, so better prerequisite safety guards would be a good addition to a future study.

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