



Using ACT in the workplace

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Background

80%-95% of the students are procrastinating (Ellis & Knaus, 1977; O'Brien 2002).

15%-20% of the adults are procrastinating (Harriott & Ferrari,1996; 2003).

95% of the procrastinators want to get rid of it : Procrastination is associated with low individual performance and long term wellbeing (Beswick, Rothblum, & Mann, 1988; Steel, Brothen, & Wambach, 2001; Wesley,1994).

The objective of this study was to investigate the efficacy of the acceptance strategy on procrastination and tasks performance, compared to a control group (no strategy).



Task 1
Reading a text (labour law) and summarizing based on a limited space. Max. 5 points.

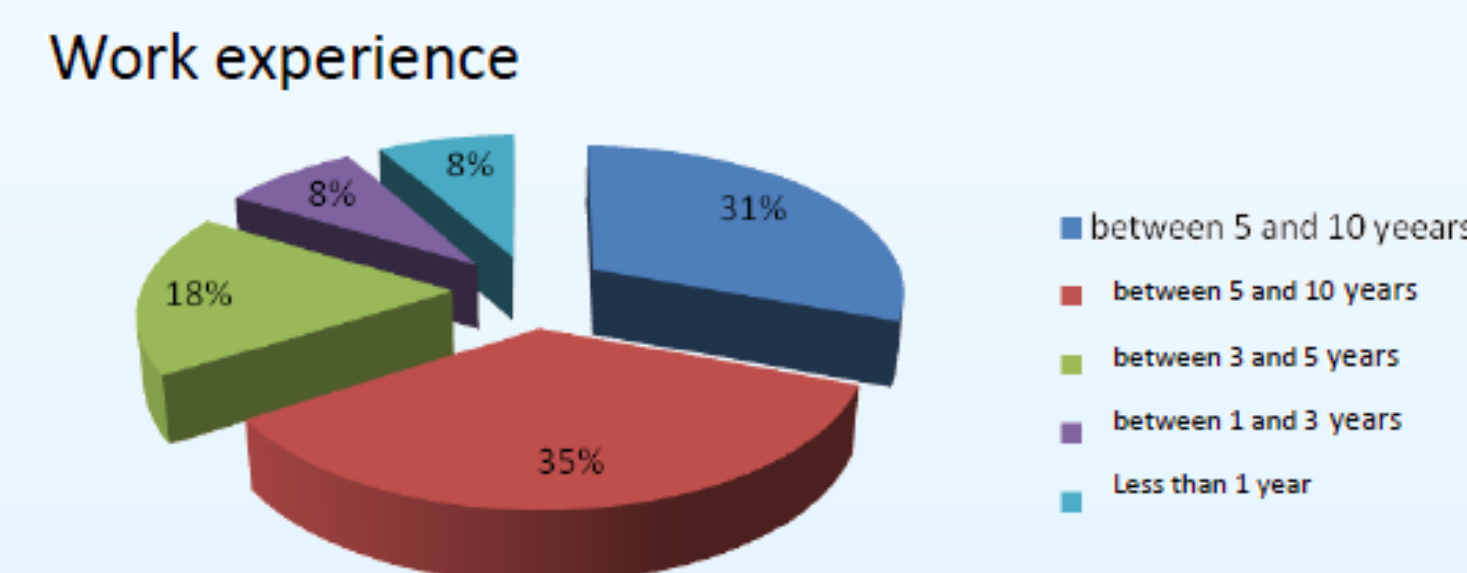
Task 2
Introducing the diacritics in a text (law). Max. 147 diacritics/points.

Task 3
Checking the errors in a project budget. Max. 7 errors/ points.

Method

Participants

88 employees in two IT companies based in Romania. 67% (59) were males and 33% were females (29). In terms of education levels, 32.90% had master degree, 60%were licensed, and 7.10% had high-school.



Measures

✓3 Work Tasks

✓Profile of Affective Distress (PAD, Opris & Macavei, 2007)

✓Tuckman Procrastination Scale (TPS, Tuckman, 1990).

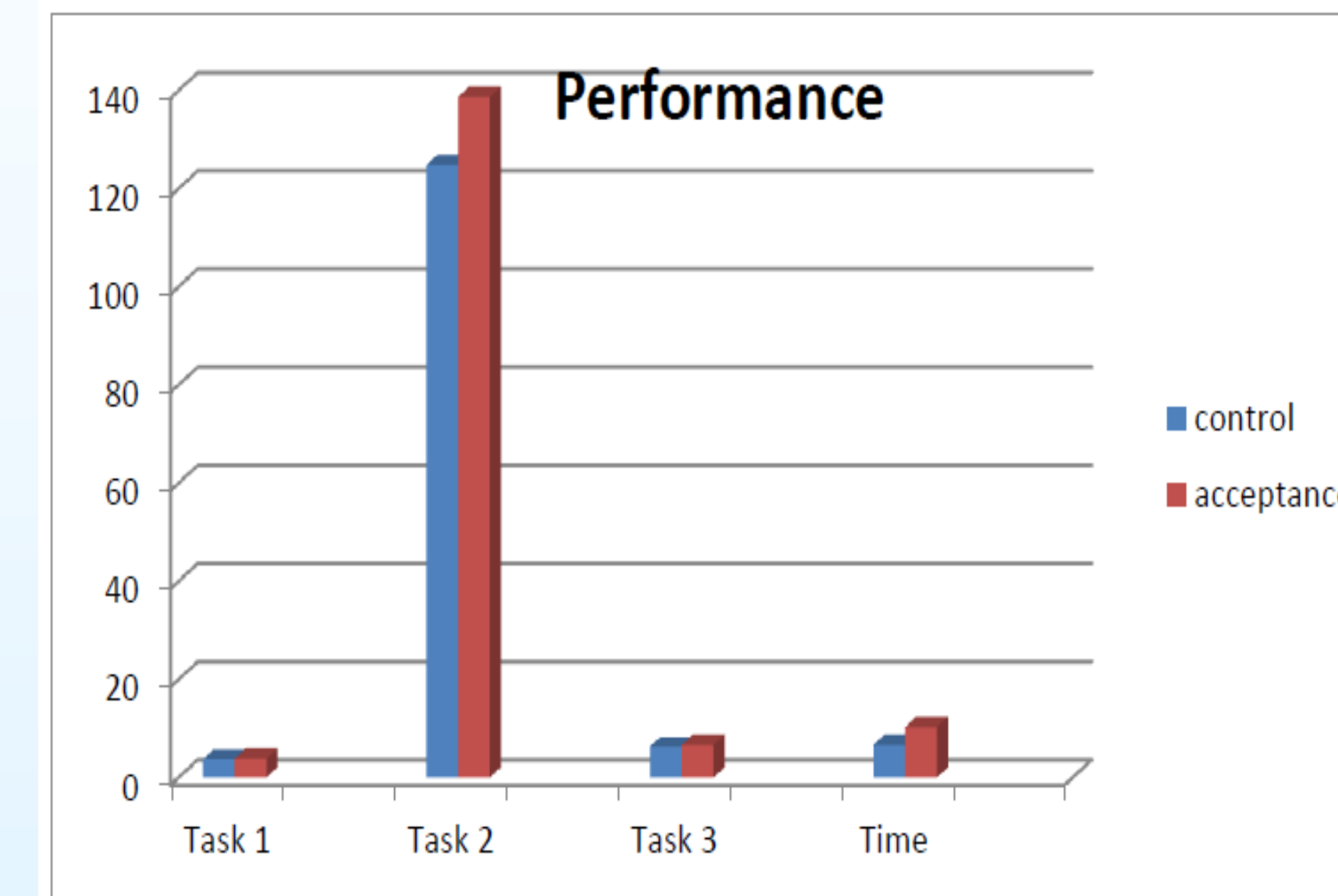
Phase 1: Baseline (8 am)
Email with tasks description – link to tasks
Mood check
Acceptance strategy
Manipulation check

Phase 2: Reminders (at 2 hours, from 10 am to 8pm)
Email reminder to press button send for tasks
Mood check
Reminder Acceptance strategy
Manipulation check

The acceptance strategy

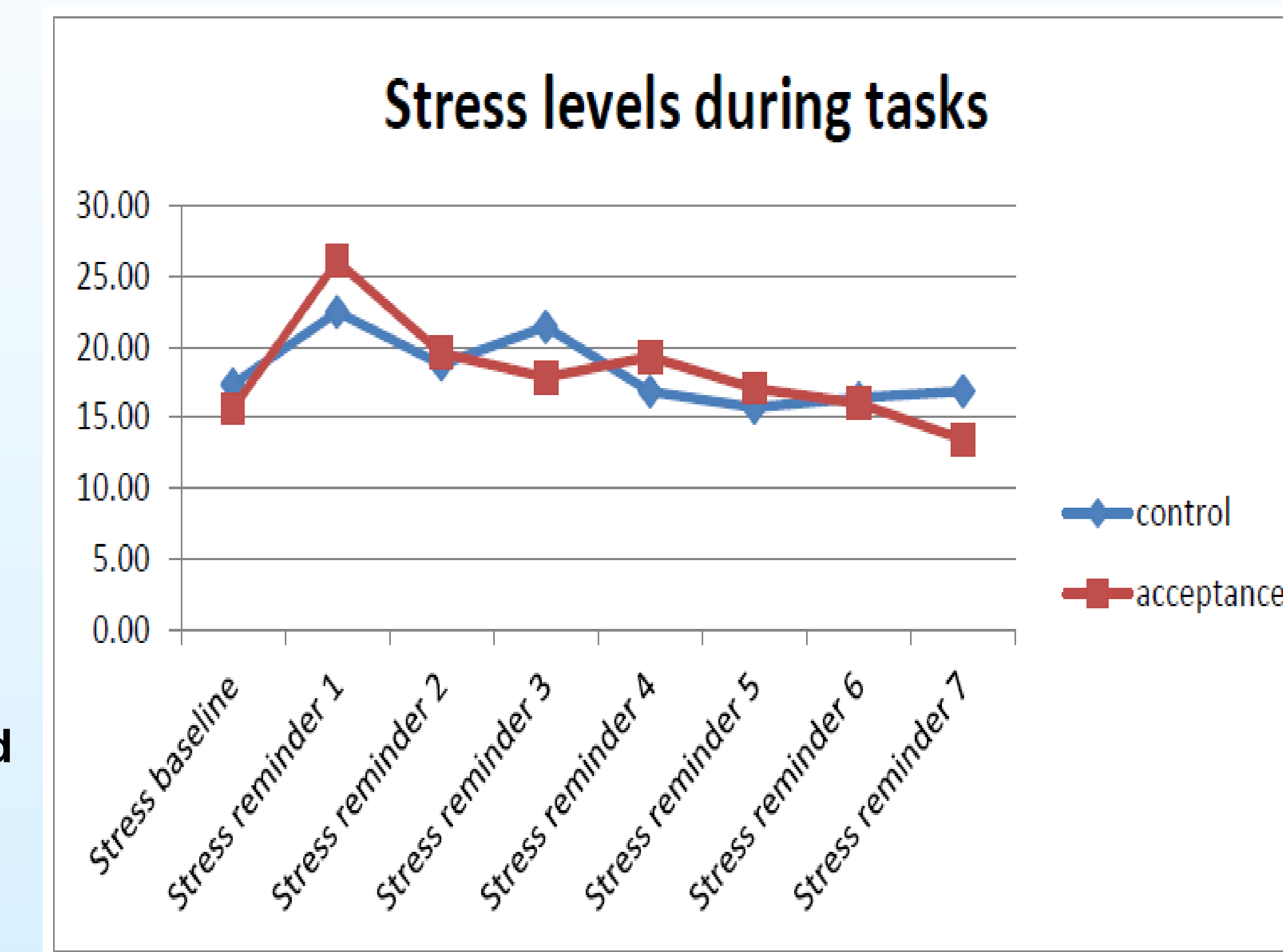
It can happen that in some situations when you deal with difficult or unpleasant tasks, you feel a certain level of discomfort, to procrastinate the tasks or not do them at all. Feel these emotions without trying to control or modify them in any way. When you will deal with the tasks, try to stay with your emotions even if it is not comfortable, and let them feel naturally without intervening or controlling them.

Results



	t	df	p
Task 1	-.594	55	.555
Task 2	-2.187	55	.033
Task 3	-.976	55	.333
Time	1.626	55	.110

No significant differences were found in terms of distress levels between the groups (all ps > .05).



Conclusion

Acceptance was found to specifically increase performance of the employees for the unpleasant and detail oriented tasks. No other statistically significant benefits were registered for the employees receiving the acceptance strategy in terms of their reported mood, procrastination or performance in tasks. This study provides important insights for developing ACT programs to overcome procrastination in the workplace.

Selective references

- Opris, D., & Macavei, B. (2007). The Profile of emotional distress: norms for the romanian population, *Journal of Cognitive and Behavioral Psychotherapies*, 7, 2.
- Tuckman, B. W. (1990). *Measuring Procrastination Attitudinally and Behaviorally*. American Educational Research Association, Boston, MA.
- Steel, P.(2007). *The Nature of Procrastination; A Meta-analytic and Theoretical Review of Quintessential Self-Regulatory Failure*. *Psychological Bulletin*, 133, 1.