

Research Activities 2: Affective reactions to FUTURE products

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The research conducted by the Faculty of Psychology is continuing with the analysis of emotional responses to audio-visual stimuli selected in the previous activity, which focused on the classification of the material produced by the adolescents of the reception center in Syracuse. Three possible types of prosocial spectators were created based on their empathic dimensions and values. As anticipated in the previous report we hypothesised that the videos that show positive topics (such as positive affect and/or constructive activities) will result in higher level of affective response irrespective of the values and empathic profiles of potential spectators. However, we also hypothesized that in the case of negative topics (such as adolescents' unconstructive attitudes) individual differences could moderate the effect of videos on affective reactions.

The experimental research focusing on the first experimental sample began in June and subjects participated in the activities planned for one month. The administration of the measures on other experimental samples is currently underway - with the same procedure that will be described in the next paragraph - with the aim of reaching a sample of about 50 subjects.

Sample and design


The sample used in the study was composed of 16 students (75% females), recruited in an Online University students, enrolled in the Personality Psychology course, aged between 22 and 70. Based on our previous study, we grouped the students in three different clusters. The present study is




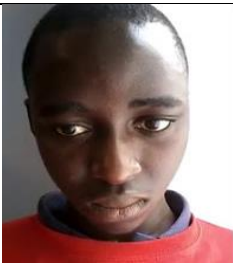
organized as a ‘within subjects’ research, where the same group of students participated in 5 different experimental conditions, as described in the procedure paragraph.

Procedure

Before the end of the course, the participants were invited to sign an informed consent and collaborate through dedicated mail by the researchers; students were then informed about the general purposes of the study, accepted to sign up an informed consent, along with the study instructions. In particular, participants fulfilled online questionnaires with their socio-demographic data and target personality variables, and followed experimental activities leading by researchers involved in the FUTURE project. The experimental activities consisted of: (a) observing video-clips selected from the broader archive of video recorded by unaccompanied minors; (b) recording themselves during their observation of the videos; (3) completing a questionnaire regarding emotions they felt during video-observation and their attitude toward immigrant’s hosting.

In particular, short films representing some of the conditions presented previously in the paragraph "identification of prototypical videos: observational study" were selected. The selected conditions were:

Cathegory	Description	Video
Construction activities	video clips in which subjects show constructive and collaborative activities; these video were recorded inside or outside the reception center	

Degradation / disapproval	video clips in which the subjects denounce - directly or indirectly - situations of unease, highlighting some situational criticalities	
4) "Provocation / transgression	videos in which behaviors, attitudes, body postures and / or provocative language are present by the subjects, both in groups and on their own;	
Positive Affectivity	videos in which the subjects self-record while exhibiting a positive emotional state	
Negative Affectivity	video clips in which the subjects self-record while exhibiting a negative emotional state	

At the end of experimental activities an interactive class was performed in which students synchronically discussed on emotional contents emerging during video observation with the guidance of the researchers of the Project.

Tools

Some selected standardized and validated measures presented in the intermediate report were used (see Spectator Profiles: person-oriented analysis paragraph). In particular, we selected the two subscale related to the affective dimensions of empathy: Empathic Concern and Personal Distress (IRI, Davis, 1980). The Portrait Values Questionnaire was used to assess personal values (PVsQ; Schwartz, 1992) and an ad hoc instrument built basing on the online discussion presented in the intermediate report was used to assess hosting attitude (see Validation of theoretical model: qualitative study paragraph).

Analyses

No hierarchical cluster analysis were be performed by starting from previous results presented in “Spectator Profiles: person-oriented analysis” study. Then, profile analyses were performed to test the principal effect of prototypic video clips and spectator’s types, and interactive effect of them on affective reactions. Finally correlations among emotional reactions to video-clip and hosting toward immigrations were performed.

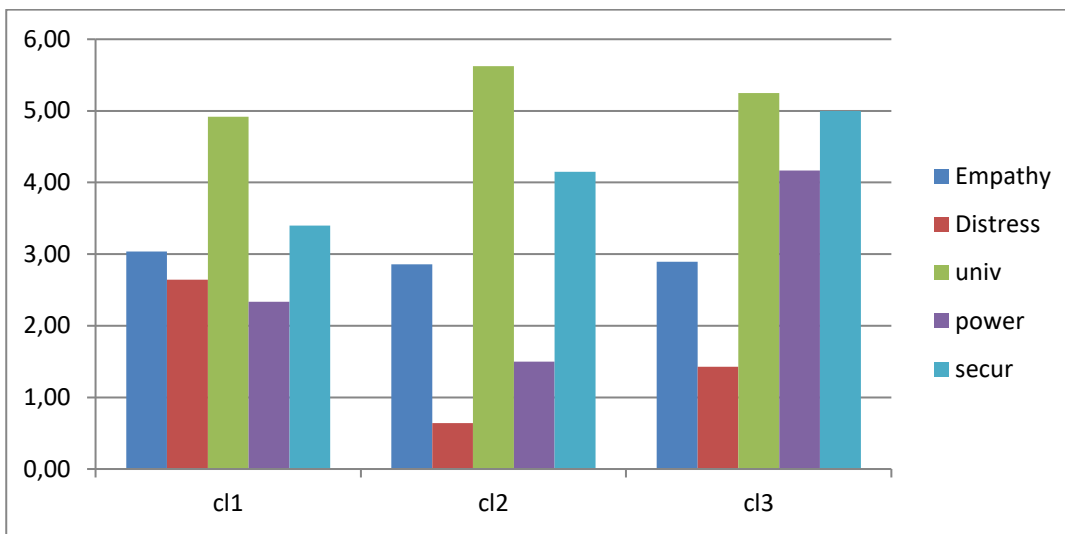
RESULTS

Cluster replication

As shown in the figure below, results supported the 3-cluster solution (figure 1).

Cluster 1 includes individuals characterized by medium-high levels of empathic concern and medium- high levels of distress, power and security than subjects in other two clusters. Cluster 2 included people characterized by highest levels of empathic concern, high levels of security and lowest levels of power. Finally Cluster 3 includes people characterized by medium –high levels of empathy and highest levels of power and security. As in the previous study, universalism shows similar levels across clusters.

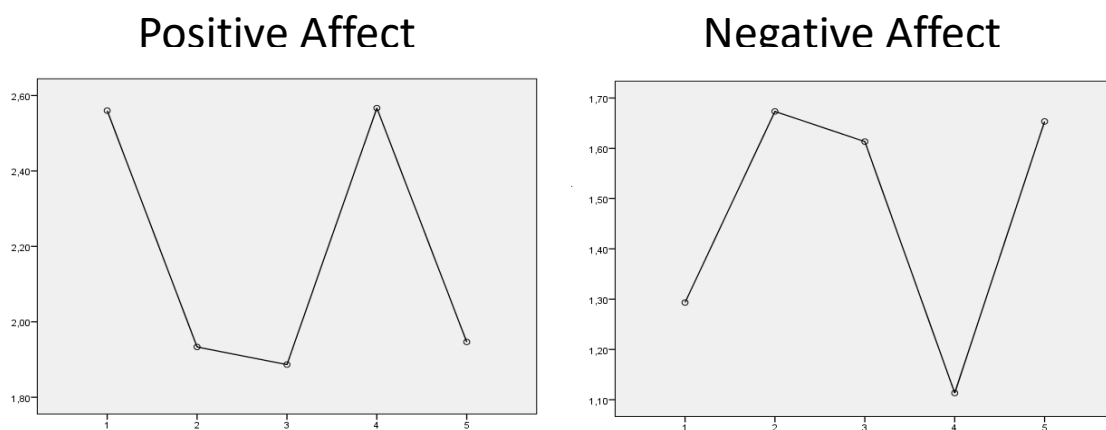
Figure 1



Emotional reactions to different video-clip

As shown in figure 2, the profile of positive and negative affectivity is specular in the 5 experimental conditions. As expected, the positive affect is higher in the case of Construction activities and Positive Affectivity, whereas the negative affect is higher in the case of Degradation / disapproval, Negative Affectivity and Provocation conditions.

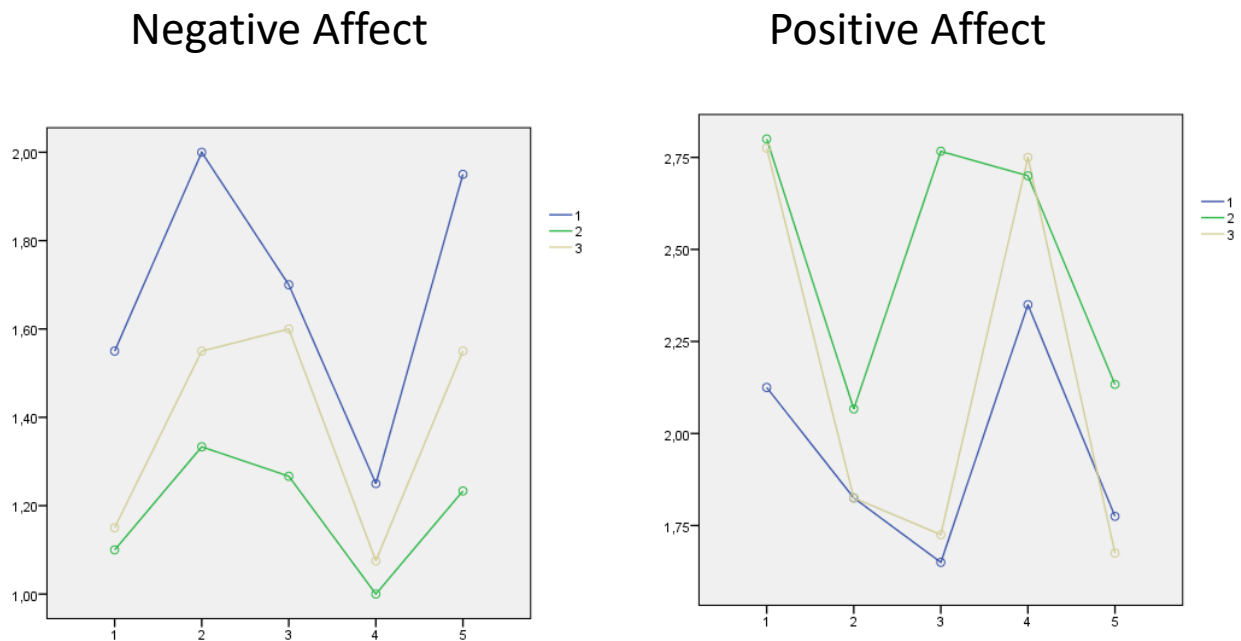
Figure 2.



Note: 1 Construction activities; 2= Degradation / disapproval; 3= Negative Affectivity; 4= Positive Affectivity; 5 = Provocation / transgression

If we consider the typology of potential spectators (figure 3), in the case of positive emotions the difference is recorded with respect to the intensity of the responses, the cluster with the higher distress is the one that has the highest values; in the case of positive affectivity the cluster with the most pro social spectators is the one that experiences positive emotions in front of these videos, albeit with a different trend depending on the type of condition considered. In particular, they affect the values in the case of negative emotions. In the interpretation of this result we must remember that by positive affectivity we mean the presence of emotional states such as calm and interest, which make us think of an involvement and attention to what they are observing (e.g. cognitive emotions).

Figure 3



Emotion reaction and hosting

As far as the correlations are concerned, we observe that the experimentation of positive emotions in front of the videos recorded by the adolescents, with the exception of the denunciation one, is associated with a more favorable attitude towards immigrants.

Videos	Reactions	Attitude toward immigrants hosting
Negative Affectivity	Negative	-.08
	Positive	.51
Positive Affectivity	Negative	.14
	Positive	.62
Construction activities	Negative	-.11
	Positive	.77
Degradation / disapproval	Negative	.03
	Positive	.08
Provocation / transgression	Negative	.08
	Positive	.55

CONCLUSIONS

The preliminary results of this fourth study (see previous report) show that, if we do not consider individual differences, positive emotions are higher when watching videos characterized by constructive activities and expressed positive emotions, and that, on the contrary, negative emotions are mainly associated with watching videos characterized by negative emotions and destructive activities. Moreover, in general it emerges that the experimentation of positive emotions is associated with a positive attitude towards immigration in general. These preliminary results are in line with the classical literature on priming underlining the impact of stimuli, according to which negative stimuli

lead to an avoidance response while positive stimuli lead to an approaching behaviour (Hamm, Schupp, & Weike, 2003; Lang, 1995).

However, it should also be stressed that the reactions of potential spectators may differ based on their empathic and value characteristics. More precisely, the cluster analysis confirms the three types of viewers found in the previous quantitative study (see previous report-viewer profiles), highlighting the role of personal distress and the value of self-assertion in distinguishing the potential recipients of the documentary. In fact, it is likely that the viewers of the documentary could be similar in terms of universalism and security, but they may differ in their tendency to experience states of anxiety and malaise and in the importance given to their own interests and personal advantages in the face of the malaise of the other. Furthermore, the preliminary results suggest that these three types of spectators may react differently to the five video conditions. Specifically, individuals in cluster 1 - initially defined as "true" pro-social would experience more positive emotions even when the situation could be provocative or a source of distress, and less negative emotions in the case of videos in which negative emotions and situations of degradation and disapproval are presented. On the other hand, viewers, who are distinguished by higher levels of distress, generally experience higher levels of negative emotions. The profile of the third cluster is less clear and probably an increase in the sample will allow us to better understand it.

The experimental study will be carried out over the next few months and the updated results will be presented at the XXVI Congreso Internacional INFAD next year.

Working in progress

During this last phase, the last activity of the project, which will evaluate the affective impact of the whole documentary on a sample of spectators, is also underway. In particular, the ongoing activity concerns the sample identification for evaluation of the most salient individual characteristics. The

activities that will be realized will follow in part the experimental design presented in the experimental study but, differently from previous study, the stimulus will be single, and it will consist of a documentary realized by using part of video-clips examined in observational study. After the presentation of the documentary, the spectators will indicate their emotional activation and involvement (positive / negative affectivity). At the moment, the collection of informed consents indicating the research procedures is underway. All students enrolled in the third year of the university course have been invited to participate.

New References

- Hamm, A. O., Schupp, H. T., & Weike, A. I. (2003). Motivational organization of emotions: Autonomic changes, cortical responses, and reflex modulation. *Handbook of affective sciences*, 187-211.
- Lang, P. J. (1995). The emotion probe: studies of motivation and attention. *American psychologist*, 50(5), 372