

Meta-Analysis Project: Emotions and Information Search

Amy Funck (a grad student at Rutgers) and Rick Lau are beginning a meta-analysis project aimed at determining the extent to which experiencing particular emotions – anxiety being the most likely – is associated with subsequent information search. This is one of the major predictions of Affective Intelligence Theory, and there are any number of published studies providing supportive evidence for this hypothesis. But there are also a number of studies that find no support for this hypothesis. Given the “crisis of replicability” that is front and center in psychology right now, the goal of our project is to see if we can identify a set of factors – experimental designs or settings, operationalizations of emotions, types of measures of dependent variables – that are associated with stronger (or weaker) support for this hypothesis. We need everyone's help to achieve this goal.

For any meta-analysis to be successful, one needs to be reasonably confident that you are aware of all research on this topic – published and unpublished both. We have collected all of the published research we can find. But most of us have papers we have not gotten around to publishing yet, projects that did not work out the way we hoped, findings that did not make it into a paper we did publish – that are relevant to the question we are trying to address. These days there are often alternative “robustness” tests of key hypotheses that are reported in online appendices. If these exist for any of your published studies, please make sure we are aware of these as well, as this is something we might miss.

We are reaching out to everyone in political psychology to tell us about – and if possible, send us copies of – any empirical tests of the association between some measured or manipulated emotion, and some direct or indirect measure of information search. This is a potentially huge research literature, and we must restrict it in some manner to make this a manageable task. Therefore we are limiting our meta-analysis to studies/analyses:

1. that date from the millennium (2000) or thereafter;
2. that attempts to measure/manipulate anxiety (/fear/worry) and anger (/mad/wrath) as distinct emotions.
3. that treat emotions as independent/predictor variables;
4. where the dependent variable is a direct or indirect measure of information search;
5. and that were conducted in some political context.

Our plan is to present the results of our analysis at ISPP next year in Berlin. We hope to start coding and analyzing this data this summer. Therefore we are asking everyone to send us (or tell us about) whatever relevant evidence you might have, by the end of summer. Please address all responses to this request to Amy Funck (amy.funck@rutgers.edu), who is the formal collector of studies for our project.

We greatly appreciate your help with the project.

Thanks, Rick Lau