

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

UCARE Research Products

UCARE: Undergraduate Creative Activities &
Research Experiences

Spring 2016

The Influence of Emotional and Situated Social Cognition Factors on Consents to Search

Sarah A. Moody

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, sarahmoody12@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/ucareresearch>



Part of the [Constitutional Law Commons](#), and the [Social Psychology Commons](#)

Moody, Sarah A., "The Influence of Emotional and Situated Social Cognition Factors on Consents to Search" (2016). *UCARE Research Products*. 10.

<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/ucareresearch/10>

This Poster is brought to you for free and open access by the UCARE: Undergraduate Creative Activities & Research Experiences at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in UCARE Research Products by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

The influence of emotional and situated social cognition factors on consents to search

Sarah A. Moody

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Background

- The Fourth Amendment protects US citizens from unlawful searches and seizures.
- The vast majority of people consent to search requests and little is known as to why.
- Numerous theories of affect exist; one suggests we elicit an orienting response to novel stimuli and appraise the situation to determine what emotions are being experienced.
- Mood and affect from prior situations often carry over and are known as incidental affect, as opposed to immediate affect.
- Fear and anger are frequently studied because they are equal in valence, but not in affect. They have been shown to differ based on a number of situational factors, such as risk.
- Situated social cognition (SSC) is a relatively new area of research that focuses on sociocultural and environmental variables.
- Inducing head nodding is shown to increase persuasion and a heavier clipboard can make the petition upon it seem to be of greater importance.
- The current study seeks to apply these psychological theories to examine the effects of emotions and SSC on decisions to consent to a search.

Hypotheses

- Both affect and SSC factors are related to the voluntariness of the consent to the search request and the participants' comfort with the search request.
- Fear and anger are negatively related to voluntariness and comfort, while positive emotions are positively related to both criteria.
- Room temperature, amount of light, and room size are positively related to voluntariness of consent and comfort with the search request.
- All the above predictors and gender predict voluntariness and comfort, while controlling for the other predictors. The model will function better for voluntariness than for comfort.
- The reduced models (Affect and SSC) will predict voluntariness and comfort as well as the full model, though the affect model will perform better than the situated social cognition model.

Sample, Materials, & Procedure

- Sample: 251 undergraduates (ages 18-39, 71.1% female, 78.9% Caucasian) after 6.9% of participants who did not consent to the search were removed
- Materials: Participants' items from home, an informed consent form, two administrations of PANAS-X, trial simulation videos, video quiz, demographic questionnaire, Incident Report Form (IRF), and debriefing questionnaire.

A research assistant (RA1) took the participant to a randomly assigned (large/small, lit/dark, warm/cool) room. They completed the first PANAS-X and a demographic questionnaire, then watched the first video. The participant completed the video quiz and were incentivized to cheat with a performance-based lottery entry. The participant graded their own quiz before starting the second video, during which RA1 retrieved RA2.

RA2 entered the room, said they had evidence of cheating on the quiz, and asked the participant if they cheated. RA2 stated there would be a search of the room and asked for consent. The participant then completed the second round of PANAS-X while RA2 gathered the IRF from the lab. After completing the IRF and debriefing, the study ended.

Table 3.

	Voluntariness of Consent to Search Request			Comfort with Search Request		
	b	β	p	b	β	p
Constant	3.314	-	.000	2.766	-	.000
Gender ¹	.345	.141	.036**	.008	.003	.968
Room Size ²	-.001	.000	.995	-.025	-.009	.890
Lighting ³	.080	.036	.580	-.076	-.027	.668
Temperature ⁴	.190	.086	.185	-.098	-.035	.582
Anger Scale 1	-.173	-.066	.493	.366	.111	.243
Anger Scale 2	-.232	-.100	.300	-.391	-.134	.159
Fear Scale 1	.031	.014	.884	.158	.059	.543
Fear Scale 2	-.267	-.147	.109	-.362	-.158	.081*
Peace Scale 1	.114	.126	.366	.277	.157	.077*
Peace Scale 2	-.015	-.011	.898	.216	.136	.127

¹ Coded 1=Male, 2=Female

⁴ Coded 1=Cool, 2=Warm

² Coded 1=Small, 2=Large

*p<.10, **p<.05, ***p<.01

³ Coded 1=Lit, 2=Dark

Table 2.

	Voluntariness of Consent to Search Request			Comfort with Search Request		
	b	β	p	b	β	p
Constant	3.963	-	.000	2.482	-	.000
Anger Scale 1	-.172	-.066	.496	.374	.114	.226
Anger Scale 2	-.274	-.118	.220	-.385	-.132	.160
Fear Scale 1	-.013	-.006	.951	.150	.056	.558
Fear Scale 2	-.251	-.138	.131	-.357	-.156	.080*
Peace Scale 1	.102	.073	.421	.273	.155	.077*
Peace Scale 2	-.061	-.048	.588	.218	.137	.111

*p<.10, **p<.05, ***p<.01

Table 3.

	Voluntariness of Consent to Search Request			Comfort with Search Request		
	b	β	p	b	β	p
Constant	3.837	-	.000	3.750	-	.000
Room Size ¹	-.040	-.018	.787	-.021	-.007	.910
Lighting ²	.0457	.021	.752	-.154	-.055	.408
Temperature ³	.252	.113	.088*	.003	.001	.986

¹ Coded 1=Small, 2=Large

³ Coded 1=Cool, 2=Warm

² Coded 1=Lit, 2=Dark

*p<.10, **p<.05, ***p<.01

Results

- The affect scales were constructed from the two administrations of the PANAS-X. The anger scales contained the variables "angry, irritable, disgusted, hostile, scornful, and loathing," the fear scales used "afraid, frightened, jittery, scared, nervous, and shaky," and the peace scales were comprised of "calm, relaxed, at ease, and confident."
- Both anger scales and fear scales were negatively related to voluntariness of consent. The second scale for each was related to comfort with the search request. The peace scale was positively associated with comfort, but was not related to voluntariness. Females and those in the warm condition gave higher ratings of voluntariness, but not of comfort.
- The full regression model predicted voluntariness, but gender was the lone contributor.
- The full model of comfort worked and had two marginally significant predictors: Fear Scale 2 and Peace Scale 1. The full model is a better predictor of voluntariness than of comfort.
- The Affect model for voluntariness worked as well as the full model, with no contributing predictors. The Affect model for comfort also worked as well as the full model, with Fear Scale 2 and Peace Scale 1 as significant predictors.
- The full models for voluntariness and comfort were better than the SSC models, which were not significant.
- The Affect model was marginally better than the SSC model at predicting voluntariness and significantly better at predicting comfort.
- The full model of voluntariness worked for both males (with only the peace scales contributing) and females (without any significant predictors). The fit of the two models was the same, though there were structural differences between the two.

Conclusions

- Contrary to the research hypothesis, the SSC factors were not related to voluntariness or comfort, though the lighting and temperature conditions were positively related to voluntariness when just the females were examined.
- As expected, the full model was a valid predictor of both voluntariness and comfort.
- This finding led to the *post hoc* analyses of the full model for voluntariness in separate gendered populations. The female model worked and the male model was only marginally significant, though it had a higher R² than the female model. Again, neither model had any significant predictors at the .05 level.
- Contrary to the hypothesis and prior research, the SSC models were not significant. The lack of contributing predictors to the models may be due to extreme collinearity among the predictors, lack of relationship to criteria, or other factors.
- We also observed a low cheating rate compared to similar paradigms. Low perceptions of risk may have led to low fear scores. Although risk was not measured, it could be that using undergraduates as the authority figures may have led the participants to take the situation less seriously.

References

- Angie, A. D., Connelly, S., Waples, E. P., & Klijgyte, V. (2011). The influence of discrete emotions on judgement and decision-making: A meta-analytic review. *Cognition & Emotion*, 25(8), 1393-1422.
- Ellsworth, P. C., & Scherer, K. R. (2003). Appraisal processes in emotion. *Handbook of Affective Sciences*, 572, V595.
- Fiske, S. T., & Taylor, S. E. (2013). *Social cognition: From brains to culture* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lerner, J. S., & Keltner, D. (2001). Fear, anger, and risk. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 81(1), 146.
- Smith, E. R., & Semin, G. R. (2004). Socially situated cognition: Cognition in its social context. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 53-117. Retrieved March 29, 2016.