

PROSOCIAL EMOTIONS: AN EXAMINATION USING THE DICTATOR GAME

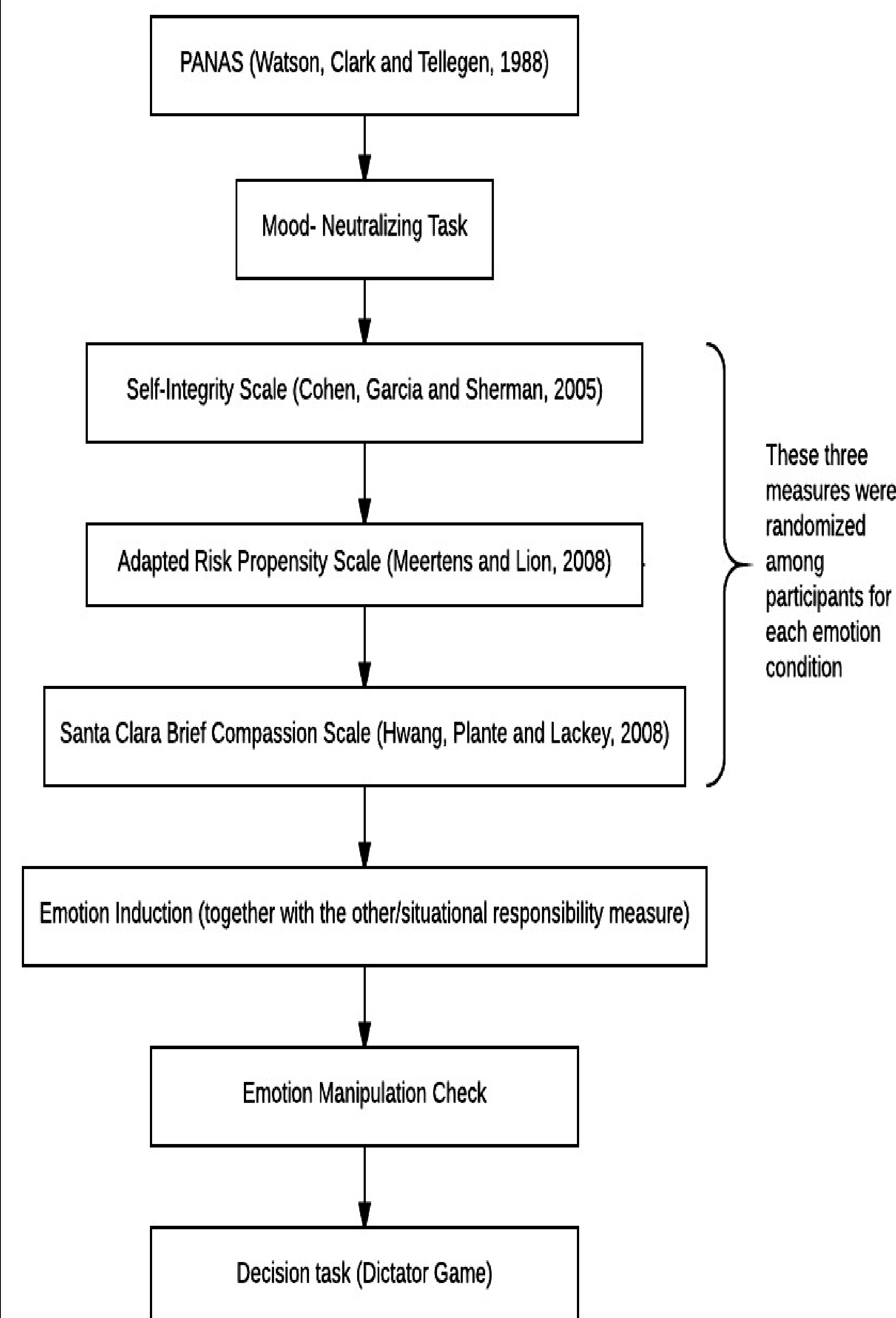
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Introduction

- Incidental emotions have an important influence on consumption behavior
- This study examined the influence of anxiety, sadness, hope, pride and a control neutral condition on altruistic decisions via the Dictator Game (DG).
- The DG is a task first set up in 1986 by Kahneman, Knetsch & Thaler (1986).
- The task is essentially a one-person decision task where individuals decide to split a windfall endowment (\$10, in this study) between themselves and another anonymous, unidentified individual. Since the recipient is anonymous, Any amount that is passed on is attributed to altruistic intentions.
- Further, in this study, a mediator, other/ situational responsibility initiated by the emotion was also investigated for the first time in predicting decisions.
- The other/situational responsibility essentially refers to the perceived responsibility of the cause of an event & can be a significant predictor of behaviors by affecting motivations.

Methods



Results

Reliability of Scales:

Self affirmation – $\alpha = .76$; $M = 45.56$ (range- 7-56), $SD = 5.74$

Risk Propensity – $\alpha = .77$, $M = 37.74$ (range- 7-63), $SD = 9.29$

Compassion – $\alpha = .88$, $M = 26.18$ (range- 5-35), $SD = 6.09$

Responsibility - $\alpha = .63$ (for 3-item scale)

Emotion Manipulation Check

Each of the emotion conditions were verified for their induction of the pertinent emotions.

One-way between subjects ANOVA - to explore the effect of emotion on altruism

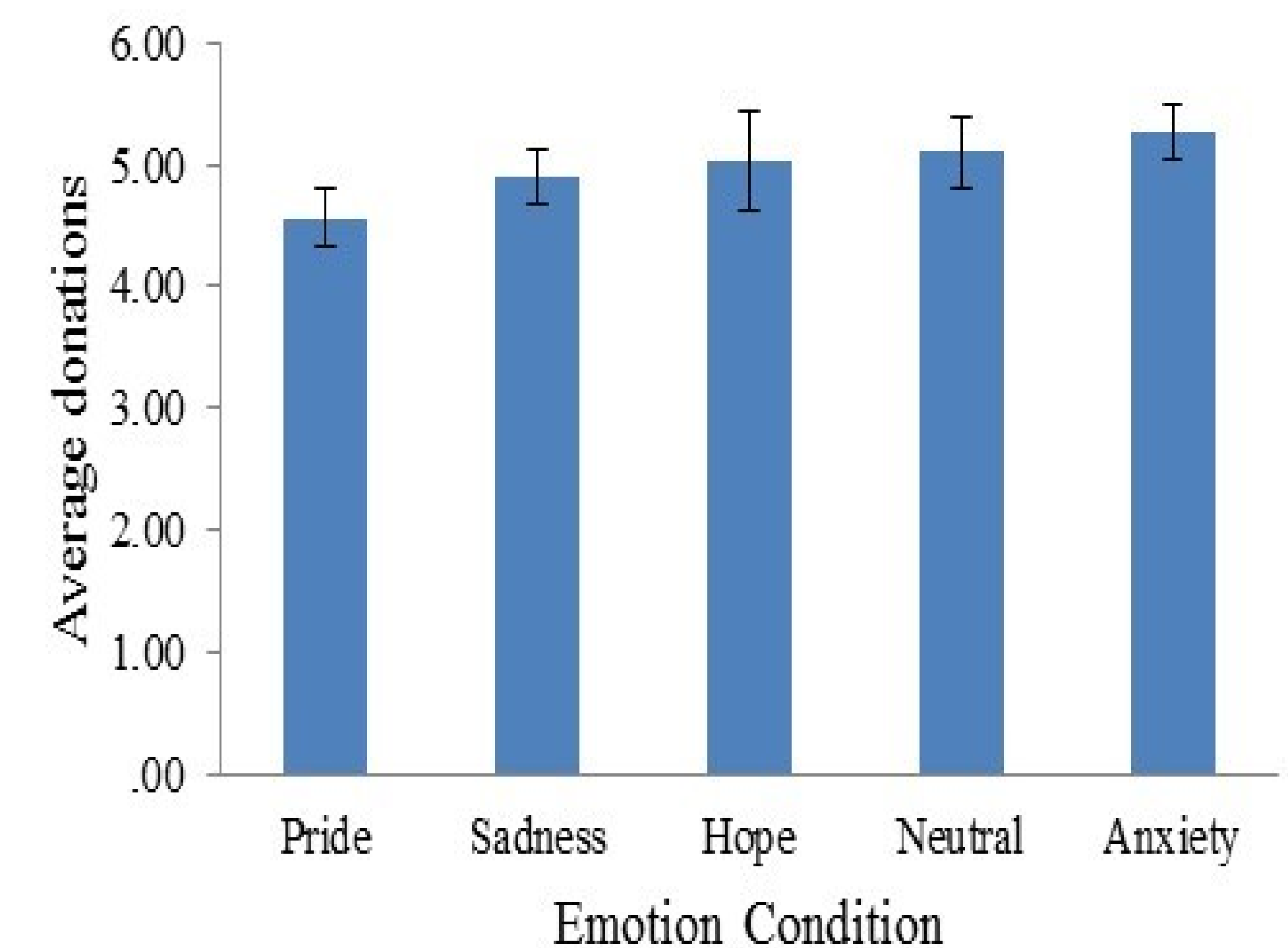
- No significant differences among the emotion conditions on altruistic giving, $F(4, 145) = 0.841$, $p = .50$.
- Overall average donation to (fictitious) counterparts across emotion conditions was \$4.97 ($SE = .13$).
- On average, anxious individuals gave \$5.27 ($SE = 0.21$) followed by those in the neutral condition ($M = 5.10$; $SE = 0.30$), hopeful individuals ($M = \$5.03$, $SE = 0.41$), sad individuals ($M = \$4.90$, $SE = 0.23$) while proud individuals passed on \$4.57 ($SE = 0.25$).

An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted for the effect of emotion condition and donation amounts, with self-affirmation and baseline measures of positive and negative as covariates.

- No significant main effect of self-affirmation, $F(1, 142) = .52$, $p = .47$, no main effect of baseline positive affect, $F(1, 142) = .39$, $p = .53$ and no main effect of baseline negative affect, $F(1, 142) = .04$, $p = .85$.
- No main effect of emotion on the donated amounts in the DG task, $F(4, 142) = .76$, $p = .55$.
- Same trend

A second ANCOVA was conducted with emotion condition on DG decisions. The covariates – risk propensity, compassion, PA score and NA score.

- Controlling for baseline measures, risk propensity and compassion was not significant, $F(4,140) = .66$, $p = .62$
- Also no main effect of baseline scores (PA - , $F(1,140) = .001$, $p = .97$; NA - , $F(1,140) = .22$, $p = .64$
- However, trait levels of compassion significantly predicted donation decisions, , $F(1,140) = 16.60$, $p < .001$



- To determine the effect of emotions moderated by responsibility on altruistic judgments, a mediation analysis was conducted.
- Responsibility significantly predicted amounts passed in the DG, $b = .09$, $SE = .03$, $t(144) = 2.79$, $p = .006$.
- Responsibility and emotion marginally explained donations, $F(5, 144) = 2.26$, $p = .05$.
- Controlling for responsibility, emotion did not predict donations, $F(4, 145) = .84$, $p = .50$.
- Results support that pride, anxiety & sadness had an indirect effect on donations through the responsibility measure.

Conclusions

- First study to compare the effect of different specific emotions (i.e., anxiety, sadness, hope & pride) on altruistic giving using the DG
- Appraisal dimensions mediating the effect of emotions on decisions - Tested for an additional aspect of perceived responsibility
- Specific emotions did not significantly differ in predicting prosocial behavior
- A trend was observed – Anxiety > Neutral > Hope > Sad > Pride – Demands future investigation

Reference

Kahneman, D., Knetsch, J and Thaler, R. (1986). Fairness as a constraint on profit seeking: entitlements in the market. *The American Economic Review*, 76(4), 728-741.