



Using emotional persuasion for changing attitudes towards entrepreneurship: An interpersonal perspective



Leonidas A. Zampetakis^{a,*}, Konstantinos Kafetsios^b, Vassilis Moustakis^a

^a Technical University of Crete, School of Production Engineering and Management, Management Systems Laboratory, University Campus, 73100 Chania, Crete, Greece

^b University of Crete, School of Social Sciences, Department of Psychology, Gallos Campus, 74100 Rethymnon, Crete, Greece

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Emotional persuasion
Entrepreneurship
Attitudes
Anticipated affect

ABSTRACT

Can a person's emotional expressions, influence attitudes towards entrepreneurship of individuals who observe those expressions* One hundred and seventy nine participants were assigned to watch a short film conveying positive affect about business startup, a short film conveying both positive and negative affect and a short film with no affect. Participants completed attitude measures before watching, and after watching the films. Controlling for the effects of individual differences and film characteristics, results showed that individuals in the positive affect group had more favorable attitudes towards entrepreneurship, after watching the short film, unlike their mixed affect or control group counterparts.

1. Introduction

In the entrepreneurship literature, the importance of entrepreneurial intentions as antecedents to planned behavior (such as starting a new venture) has been emphasized (Bird, 1988; Linan and Chen, 2009). Consistent with this, various entrepreneurial intention models have been proposed. As an alternative to the personality theories, the attitude approach (Robinson et al., 1991) has become widely used, with Ajzen's theory of planned behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) being one of the most often used theoretical frameworks for the prediction of the intention to found an enterprise (Krueger et al., 2000; Schlaegel and Koenig, 2014). Briefly, the TPB postulates that an individual is motivated to perform a particular behavior (intention-INT) to the extent that she expects to have control over performing that behavior (perceived behavioral control-PBC), has a positive attitude toward that behavior (ATT) and a perceived social pressure to perform the behavior (subjective norm-SN) (Krueger et al., 2000; Linan and Chen, 2009; Schlaegel and Koenig, 2014).

When the TPB is applied to entrepreneurship, there is wide recognition that attitudes towards entrepreneurship represent one of the main antecedents of entrepreneurial intent explaining a significant amount of the variance in entrepreneurial intentions (Autio et al., 2001; Schlaegel and Koenig, 2014). As such, increasing attitudes towards entrepreneurship (i.e., increasing the attractiveness of starting one's own business) has a direct impact on entrepreneurial intentions. Moreover, attitudes are considered relatively less stable than personality traits, and can change both across time and across situations through interactive processes with the environment (Bohner and Dickel, 2011). Although attitudes are open to change, existing research concerning the change of attitudes towards entrepreneurship (i.e., through entrepreneurship education) provides inconclusive results (Bae et al., 2014).

The importance of emotional strategies for persuasion has been widely acknowledged and emotions stemming from persuasive messages can influence decision making and evaluative judgments such as attitudes (Crano and Prislin, 2006; Petty and Briñol, 2015;

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: lzabetak@dpem.tuc.gr (L.A. Zampetakis), k.kafetsios@psy.soc.uoc.gr (K. Kafetsios), moustaki@dpem.tuc.gr (V. Moustakis).

Van Kleef, 2016). In this study, we adopt a social function approach to emotions (Van Kleef, 2009, 2016) and seek to understand the interpersonal influence of emotions on the change of attitudes towards entrepreneurship. Specifically, we investigated how a source's emotional expressions influence the attitudes towards entrepreneurship of students who observe those expressions. According to Emotion as Social Information (EASI) model (Van Kleef, 2009) emotional expressions have important social functions in that they influence the people who observe them, by providing information.

2. Background literature

Attitudes towards entrepreneurship are beliefs and perceptions with respect to personal desirability of starting a business, which are in turn connected to expectations of how outcomes resulting from business startup, will affect the individual (Ajzen, 1991). Attitudes are different from other evaluative conditions, such as affect (i.e., moods and emotions) with the latter being ephemeral and cannot be stored, while attitudes are not constrained by time and may be either temporary or enduring (Clare and Schnall, 2005).

Although affective information is a key component of attitudes (including cognition and behavioral information-Eagly and Chaiken, 1993) yet there has been disproportionate preoccupation with the cognitive and behavioral components. Moreover, affect plays an important role in how people organize and express their attitudes toward various social objects (Forgas, 2008). Persuasive messages induce more attitude change when their arguments match the affective and cognitive content of the recipient's attitude toward the issue (Haddock and Maio, 2004).

Two distinct strategies of affective persuasion can be identified: (a) persuasion through arousal of emotions, which emphasizes the intrapersonal effects of affective states on persuasion and (b) persuasion through appeal to anticipated emotions (Miceli and Castelfranchi, 2014), where, the persuader's message is meant to modify the recipient's beliefs by anticipating the emotion recipient will feel as a result of his or her own choices, as a means for activating the recipient's goal of (not) feeling that emotion. In line with the EASI model, anticipated emotions provide information to observers, which may in turn, influence their attitudes. An anticipation of emotion may either favor the “pre-feeling” of what the individual will (presumably) feel at that future time (Gilbert and Wilson, 2007) or elicit some other emotion about the anticipated emotion (Miceli and Castelfranchi, 2014). Anticipated emotions can also be used as arguments. As such, the persuasive effects of anticipated emotions will depend on the predominant valence (positive or negative) of the recipient's issue-relevant thoughts.

The main objective of the study is to examine whether the extent that the recipient is led to have primarily positive cognitive responses (by watching a short-film with positive anticipated emotions), attitudes towards entrepreneurship change in a positive way. Moreover, considering that messages about entrepreneurs are not always conducive to entrepreneurship, presenting a negative image of entrepreneurial people who are shown as criminal and greedy (e.g., Radu and Redien-Collot, 2008) a second objective was to examine the effects on attitudes towards entrepreneurship of a short-film with both positive and negative anticipated emotions.

3. Method

3.1. Data collection and participants

In April 2015 email messages were sent to students from two public universities in Greece. The email was accompanied by a link to an online questionnaire, which contained: (a) the “t1 questionnaire” with questions about demographic data, attitudes towards entrepreneurship (Att1), state positive affect (PA1) and negative affect (NA1), (b) a link to a short film and (c) the “t2 questionnaire” with questions about Att2, PA2, NA2, and other exploratory theoretical constructs. After completing the first set of questions, students were instructed to watch the short-film. Then, students were asked to answer the second set of questions. A summary of the study findings was offered to participants as an incentive to participate. The study was approved by the university's institutional review board.

We received matched questionnaires from 179 students (60% women). The overall response rate was 16%. The mean sample age was 23.72 years ($SD = 4.04$). Sixty two participants were postgraduate students. Thirty seven percent of the participants reported that one of their parents owned a full time business most of the time while they were growing up, 83% reported that they know an entrepreneur in their close environment.

3.2. Stimuli

Three versions of a short film were created in cooperation with an independent film-maker. The first version contained primarily positive anticipated emotions (positive group – film duration: 3 min 24 s; <https://vimeo.com/131299657> – password: article) ($N = 63$), the second both positive and negative anticipated emotions (mixed group, film duration: 4 min 38 s; <https://vimeo.com/131333311>) ($N = 61$). A final film, served as a control condition, with no anticipated emotions (flat group – film duration: 3 min 10 s; <https://vimeo.com/131226134>) ($N = 55$). The short films are also available from the YouTube channel of the EMO-ENTRE project (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8lYPsgvEGDd172oO2cEikQ>). All participants were randomly assigned to each film version.

Each version featured the same context: a girl sitting in a coffee shop who is reading the employment ads of a newspaper. The entrepreneur-owner enters and the girl recognizes him because she has seen his face in a business magazine. It was an interview. She starts reading the interview (see Table 1 for the basic characteristics of the three films). We hear the voice of an entrepreneur describing how the entrepreneurial process felt like and at the same time we watch the girl imagining herself in the future, being in the position of the entrepreneur and expressing different vocal emotional displays for each film version (anticipating positive affect,

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/5110025>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/5110025>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)