

Effects of an Envious Experience on Schadenfreude and Economic Decisions Making

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Abstract : Social emotions are physiological, cognitive and behavioral phenomenon that intervene in the mechanisms of adaptation of individuals and their context. These are mediated by interpersonal relationship and language. Such emotions are subdivided into moral and comparison. The present research emphasizes two comparative emotions: Envy and Schadenfreude. Envy arises when a person lack of quality, possessions or achievements and these are superior in someone else. The Schadenfreude (SC) expresses the pleasure that someone experienced by the misfortune of the other. The relationship between both emotions has been questioned before. Hence there are reports showing that envy increases and modulates SC response. Other documents suggest that envy causes SC response. However, the methodological approach of the topic has been made through self-reports, as well as the hypothetical scenarios. Given this problematic, the neuroscience social framework provides an alternative and demonstrates that social emotions have neurophysiological correlates that can be measured. This is relevant when studying social emotions that are reprehensible like envy or SC are. When tested, the individuals tend to report low ratings due to social desirability. In this study, it was drawn up a proposal in research's protocol and the progress on its own piloting. The aim is to evaluate the effect of feeling envy and Schadenfreude has on the decision-making process, as well as the cooperative behavior in an economic game. To such a degree, it was proposed an experimental model that will provoke to feel envious by performing games against an unknown opponent. The game consists of asking general knowledge questions. The difficulty level in questions and the strangers' facial response have been manipulated in order to generate an ecological comparison framework and be able to arise both envy and SC emotions. During the game, an electromyography registry will be made for two facial muscles that have been associated with the expressiveness of envy and SC emotions. One of the innovations of the current proposal is the measurement of the effect that emotions have on a specific behavior. To that extent, it was evaluated the effect of each condition on the dictators' economic game. The main intention is to evaluate if a social emotion can modulate actions that have been associated with social norms, in the literacy. The result of the evaluation of a pilot model (without electromyography record and self-report) have shown an association between envy and SC, in a way that as the individuals report a greater sense of envy, the greater the chance to experience SC. The results of the economic game show a slight tendency towards profit maximization decisions. It is expected that at the time of using real cash this behavior will be strengthened and also to correlate with the responses of electromyography.

Keywords : envy, schadenfreude, electromyography, economic games

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