

Affective Forecasting About Future Events: My Friend Better Than Me?

Christophe, Virginie^a

^a Department of Psychology: University of Liège, Liège, Belgium

I. INTRODUCTION

Previous experiments have demonstrated that we often fail to make accurate affective forecasting for future. One of the best known biases that lead us to make wrong predictions is called *Impact Bias* (overvaluation of the emotional impact of specific events). Another bias is the *Personality Neglect* bias that is the neglect of our dispositional traits to predict our emotional reactions. However, few are known about empathic forecasting as well as the influence of events intensity.

II. AIM

Because they have an external point of view, could our friends avoid these biases and be better predictors than us?
So, is that all events cause the same degree of prediction error?

III. METHODS

PARTICIPANTS

N = 138 (80 females)

Age: 18 – 33 years (23.3 mean age)

MATERIAL

STEP 1

Participants were recruited in the same class and were asked to work in pairs of friends. Then, they predicted the emotional reactions of themselves and their friend when they will obtain results for one exam two months later on a 7-point Likert scale.

They should forecast these reactions for three possibilities: if they will achieve low grade (< 4/10), middle grade (= 5 until 6/10), and high grade (> 7/10).

Additionally, they completed a personality test (Big Five Inventory) for themselves and for their friend anew.

STEP 2

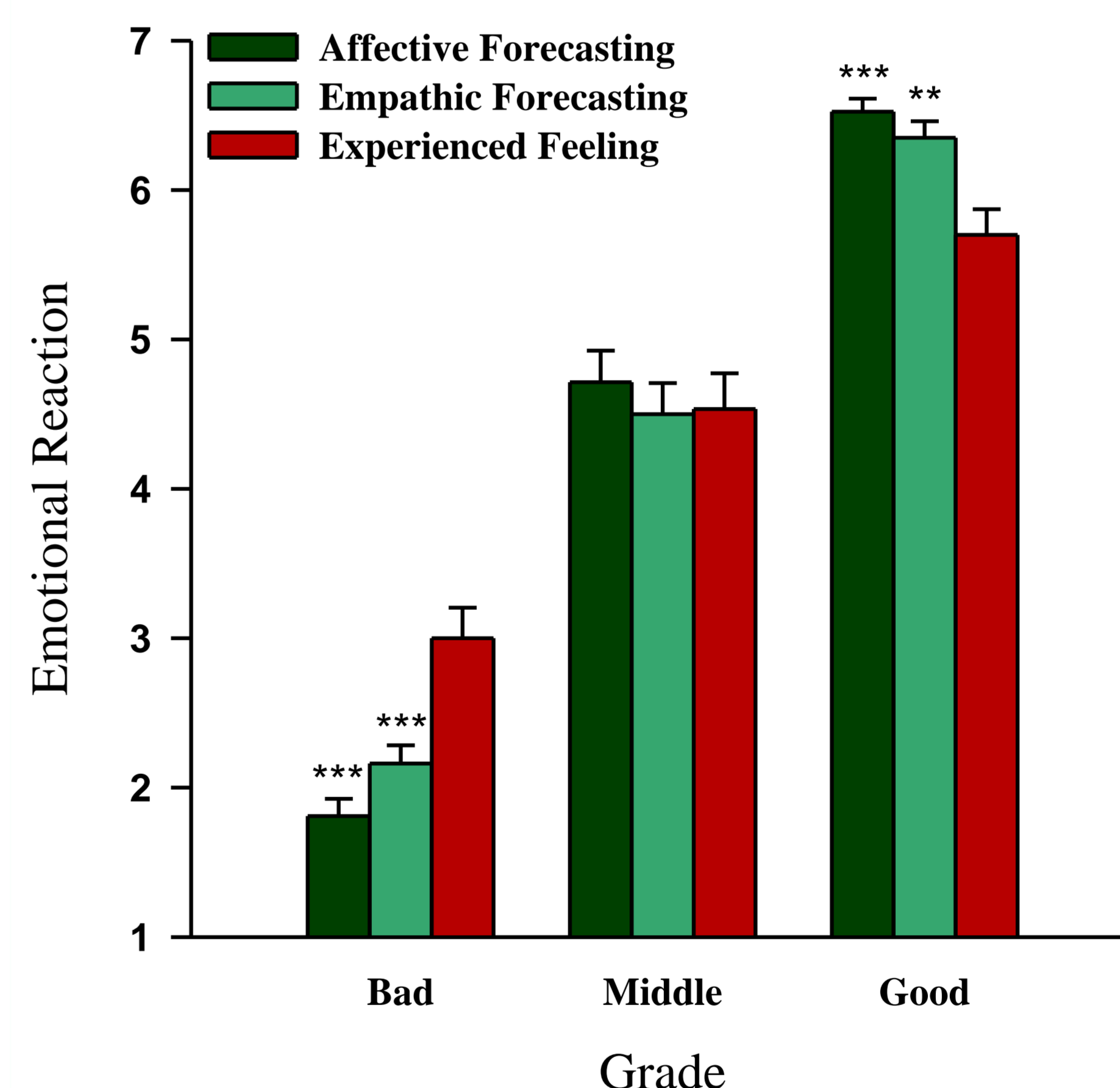
Participants were contacted by SMS eight hours after that the results of this exam were available, and were requested to rate their current emotional feelings on the same 7-point Likert Scale.

IV. RESULTS



PERSONAL AND FRIEND'S CORRELATIONS TO BFI TEST

Agreeability	Conscientiousness	Extraversion	Neuroticism	Openness
r=0.31 (p=0.001)	r=0.23 (p<0.01)	r=0.51 (p<0.001)	r=0.33 (p=0.001)	r=0.41 (p<0.001)

PREDICTIONS AND EXPERIENCED FEELING



V. CONCLUSION

-  This study replicates previous findings demonstrating the *Impact Bias*. Indeed, we tend to make wrong predictions about our emotional state but only for extreme events whereas moderate ones seem to be not affected by such bias. This stresses the role of events intensity.
-  While external people like friends correctly assess our personality, they also fail in predicting our future emotions. But in a similar manner, these errors of prediction depend of events intensity. Despite an external point of view, empathic forecasting appear sensitive to the same bias that personal affective forecasting.