

6-10-2017

## THE POTENTIAL (IN) ACCURACY OF PERCEIVED EMOTIONS: HOW COMMUNICATION CHANNEL INTERFERES WITH EMOTIONAL CONTAGION (INTERACTIVE PAPER)

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### Recommended Citation

Coombs, Joseph; Cardon, Melissa; Franklin, Rebecca; and Murnieks, Charles Y. (2017) "THE POTENTIAL (IN) ACCURACY OF PERCEIVED EMOTIONS: HOW COMMUNICATION CHANNEL INTERFERES WITH EMOTIONAL CONTAGION (INTERACTIVE PAPER)," *Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research*: Vol. 37 : Iss. 2 , Article 13.

Available at: <https://digitalknowledge.babson.edu/fer/vol37/iss2/13>

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≈ INTERACTIVE PAPER ≈

## THE POTENTIAL (IN) ACCURACY OF PERCEIVED EMOTIONS: HOW COMMUNICATION CHANNEL INTERFERES WITH EMOTIONAL CONTAGION

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### Principal Topic

Scholars have analyzed how emotions drive entrepreneurial efforts (Cardon et al., 2009; Foo, Uy & Baron, 2009), affect cognition (Baron, 2008), and influence venture investment (Chen et al., 2009; Mitteness et al., 2012). However, we often implicitly assume that the emotions entrepreneurs experience are accurately perceived by others, and that communication channels between individuals (print, face-to-face, etc.) are not instrumental in decision-making (i.e., all channels are equally veridical). We are aware of no prior work that analyzes how emotions are conveyed or perceived differently based on communication channel utilized, such as differences between the written word (Letwin et al., 2016), or visual and audio expression (Chen et al., 2009; Mitteness et al., 2012). Therefore, we investigate these assumptions to extend our understanding of how emotion travels between sender and receiver in the entrepreneurial context.

### Method

We utilized video segments of four practicing entrepreneurs discussing reasons they founded their venture, and from each video created three different versions corresponding to different communication channels: 1) audio only (blank visual); 2) visual only (blank audio); and 3) full video (with audio and visual). This yielded 12 experimental cases (4 entrepreneurs x 3 versions), which were randomized. Each respondent rated each segment (N=156 decisions) concerning idea quality, entrepreneur competence, entrepreneur passion, and likelihood that the entrepreneur would be successful. Respondents also rated how likely they were to invest in the firm.

iMotions 6.1 software was used to evaluate entrepreneurs' emotional experiences in the recorded segments and the respondents' emotional experience while watching the segments. This design allows us to catalog the ongoing emotional experiences of both entrepreneur and receiver in real-time, and also to reduce prospective respondent bias since the software codes emotional experiences objectively.

### Results & Implications

Results indicate that the channel of communication significantly impacts respondent evaluations of passion and competence of entrepreneurs, quality of venture ideas, and likelihood of investment. Respondent evaluations were influenced by negative emotional reactions to the entrepreneurs, especially sadness (which decreased evaluations of passion and competence) and disgust (which decreased evaluations of preparedness, idea quality, and likelihood of success).

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