On Implicit Affect and Trying Harder: New insights

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Recently published research on the implicit-affect-primes-effort (IAPE) model (Gendolla, 2012) has revealed ample evidence for the systematic impact of implicitly processed affective cues on resource mobilization during cognitive tasks (e.g., Freydefont, Gendolla, & Silvestrini, 2012; Gendolla & Silvestrini, 2012; Lasauskaite, Gendolla, & Silvestrini, 2013). Extending the already available evidence, I report a series of new yet unpublished studies on the systematic influence of implicitly processed affective cues on effort mobilization—the intensity aspect of motivation. Those studies contrasted the effects of implicitly and explicitly presented and processed affect primes (facial expressions) and the impact of different types of negative affect—sadness, anger, and fear—on effort-related cardiac response during the performance of cognitive tasks. In further support of the IAPE model, those studies revealed that implicit fear, anger, and sadness have different systematic effects on effort mobilization: Implicit fear and sadness cues that are processed online during performance render tasks subjectively more difficult, resulting in relatively high effort as long as success is possible and justified. By contrast, anger cues’ effect is facilitating, resembling that of happiness. Moreover it was found that the effects of explicitly presented affective stimuli have opposite effects on resource mobilization than implicitly processed affective cues (Lasauskaite, Gendolla, & Silvestrini, 2014). Implications of these findings for theories about self-regulation, implicit affect, and implicit motivation are discussed.