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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Affect assessment in crisis negotiation: An exploratory case study using two distinct indicators

Wolfgang Bilsky , Julia Müller, Anke Voss & Everhard Von Groote

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Abstract

The Gottschalk–Gleser hostility scale and Rogan and Hammer's message affect were tested as indicators of emotionality in crisis negotiation. Both measures are supposed to be sensitive to changes in emotionality and to differentiate between phases of escalation and de-escalation. To validate this supposition, three hypotheses were tested, stating that (1) the overall level of emotionality should be higher for a hostage taker as compared to a negotiator; (2) for both protagonists the level of emotionality should be higher in escalating phases than in de-escalating phases; and (3) the change from de-escalating to escalating phases should be more pronounced for a hostage taker than for a negotiator. Seventeen phone calls from an authentic hostage taking, classified as escalating (10) and de-escalating (7), were analysed with both measures

to test these hypotheses. Significant main effects and interactions were identified in this case study, supporting our hypotheses. Results are discussed against the background of the present research conditions.

Keywords:

- Affect assessment
- crisis negotiation
- hostility
- message affect
- escalation
- hostage taking

Notes

1. According to these authors’ terminology, affect can be distinguished from the more complex class of emotions.
2. Further research is needed to validate the impact of the language intensity correlates determined by Bowers ([1964](#)); therefore we refrained from using any weights.

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