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POLLICINO, Carla, GAO, Jie, CONTI, Daniela, COMMODARI, Elena and SORANZO, Alessandro <<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-4445-1968>>

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Q-methodology and aesthetic preferences for IOs: the role of Alexithymia

Carla Pollicino, Jie Gao, Daniela Conti, Elena Commodari, Alessandro Soranzo

Abstract

This study investigated the aesthetic preference for Interactive Objects (IOs) by using an innovative Q-method and tested whether it exists a relationship between preference for IOs and Alexithymia, measured by the Toronto Alexithymia Scale (TAS-20). The IOs employed were 3D artefacts differing for size (large vs small), material (rough vs smooth), shape (angular vs rounded) and behavior (vibrating, lighting, sounding or quiescent). A novel analysis procedure for Q-sorting data was employed to estimate both the importance and the preference for each variable. Results show that behaviour was the most important variable, whilst in terms of preference, participants preferred lighting-up and rounded IOs. Some differences for the preferences emerged between the participants ranking in the 2 Q-factors emerged from the data. These results are in line with those obtained by Soranzo et al (2018; QJEP) using a Likert scale, supporting the robustness of the innovative q-method. Although no significant relationship emerged between Alexithymia and aesthetics preference, it was interesting that participants reporting higher levels of Alexithymia were mostly loaded on the same Q-factor.