

ALEXITHYMIA AND EMOTIONAL SALIENCE IN ITEM SELECTION

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**Introduction:** Evidence associates alexithymia with a range of psychopathology including, in particular, depression.  
**Objectives:** To investigate whether alexithymia is linked to enhanced levels of dysphoric salience in the individual’s environment.  
**Aims:** To determine whether item selection among individuals with lower and higher levels of alexithymia is sensitive to euphoric and dysphoric linkages.  
**Methods:** A set of items was selected by each participant (N = 106), and for each item its perceived value established via the relation  $v(i, n) = (n - i)/(n - 1)$ . A set of five affective saliences was elicited for each item.  
**Results:** Regression established that whereas perceived values for lower levels of alexithymia were associated with emotional comfort and past happiness, for higher levels they were associated with present sadness (Figures 1 and 2).

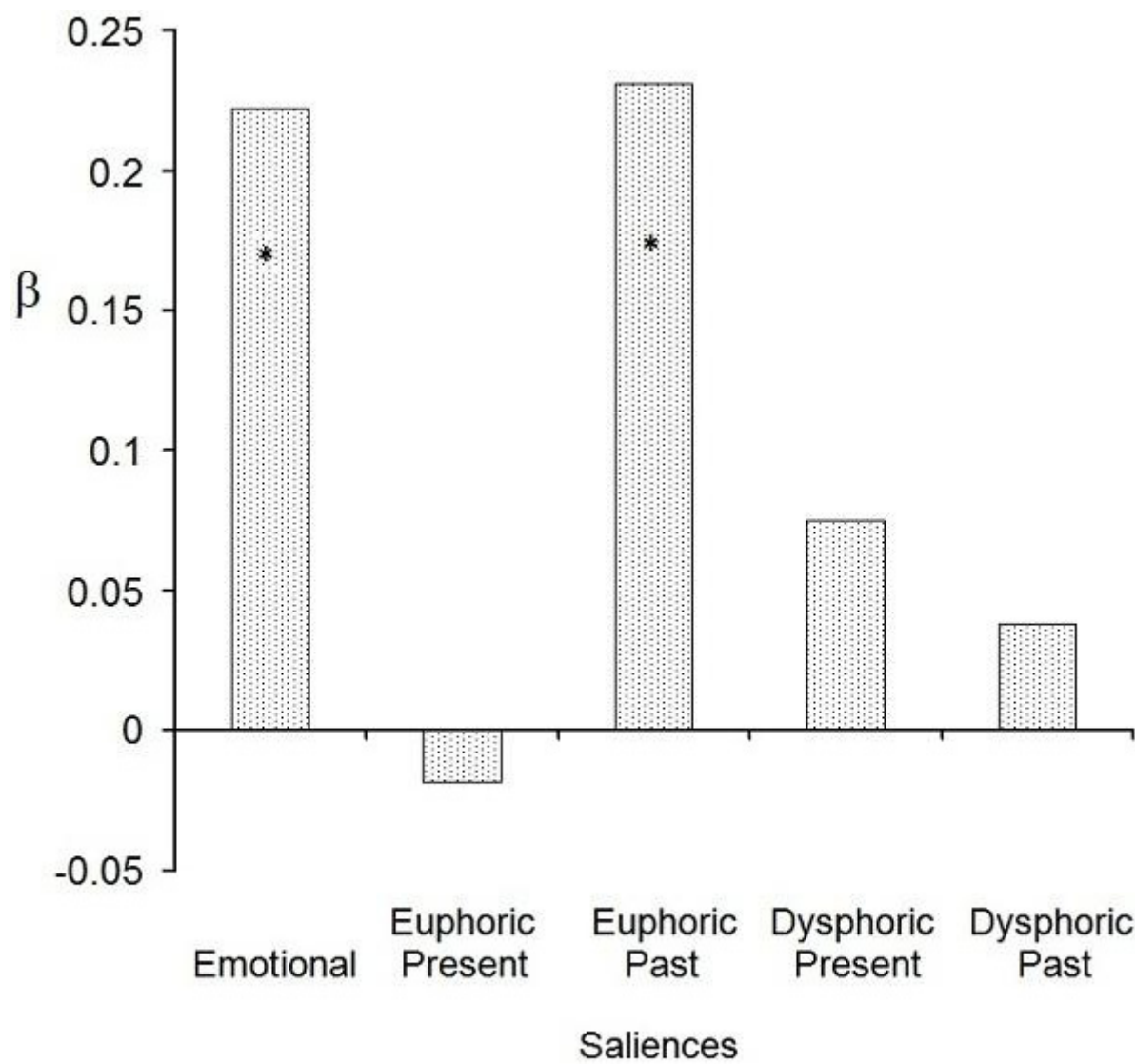


Figure 1. Low alexithymia: Standardized dependence of perceived value on affective saliences (\* $p < .05$ )