

Levels of Tension in Relation to Video Use in Therapy Sessions

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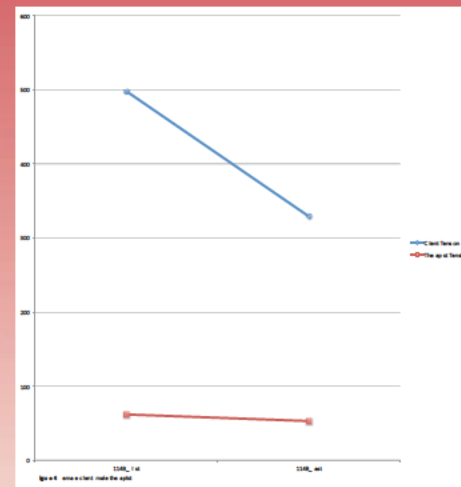
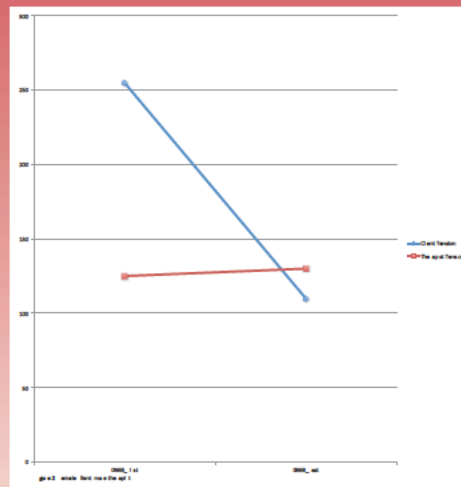
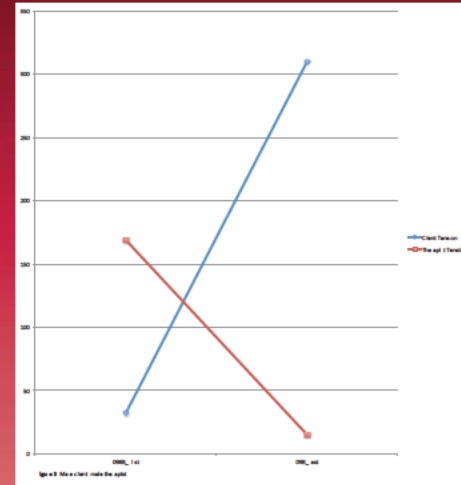
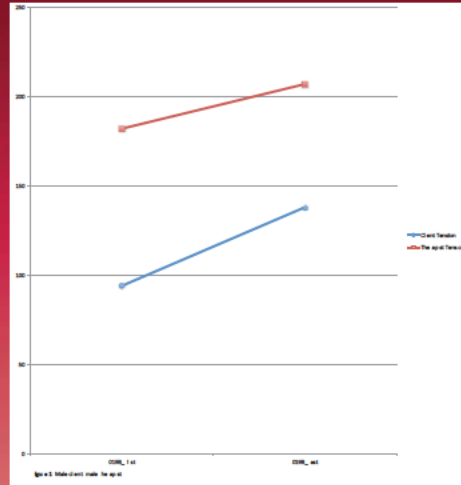
Does the size of video cameras in therapeutic research affect the levels of tension demonstrated by clients and therapists?

Introduction

- The use of video cameras has been commonly used to record stable interactions of individuals receiving psychotherapy. Small cameras have been featured in studies designed to overcome issues of obtrusiveness. However, the effects of these forms of data collecting methods on the therapeutic relationship are not yet understood (Jewitt, 2012).
- It is hypothesized in the present study that the size of video cameras used in therapeutic research can affect the levels of tension demonstrated by clients and therapists. It is predicted that if the camera size used to record therapy does affect levels of tension, then inconspicuous, wall-mounted cameras will produce a lower amount of tension and larger tripod-mounted cameras will produce a greater amount of tension.
- This research will provide insight into the impact of various forms of data collecting methods and more importantly their effects on the establishment of the therapeutic relationship.

Method

- Participants:** The participants were four clients (2 females, 2 males) and one male therapist recruited from FAU's Counseling and Psychological Services center. The therapist treated all four clients.
- Materials:** A small GoPro camera, a large tripod-mounted camera, and the Specific Affect Coding System (SPAFF), created by Dr. John Gottman.
- Procedure:** Participants were recorded using a tripod-mounted camera or a GoPro camera during a fourth therapy session.
 - Tension, as defined by SPAFF, is an uncomfortable feeling that results from feeling worried or anxious when an undesirable topic is introduced into the conversation.
 - Each session was split into two segments consisting of the first and last 15 minutes and then coded accordingly by trained coders.



Results

The total amount of tension recorded in seconds for all participants were compared for the sessions recorded with the GoPro cameras and those using the tripod-mounted cameras.

- Clients recorded with larger cameras ($M = 149.25$, $SD = 72.81$) were not significantly more tense as clients with smaller cameras ($M = 292.25$, $SD = 192.98$)*.
- The therapist recorded with larger cameras ($M = 161.00$, $SD = 40.06$) was not significantly more tense as when recorded with smaller cameras ($M = 74.75$, $SD = 66.05$)*.
- Female clients ($M = 298.00$, $SD = 161.40$) were not significantly more tense than male clients ($M = 143.50$, $SD = 119.21$)*.

*Note: a Mann-Whitney U Test was performed for hypothesis testing.

Discussion

- Contrary to our hypothesis, no significant differences in the measures of tension were found in participants recorded using a smaller GoPro camera as opposed to those who were recorded with the larger tripod-mounted cameras.
- One observation, as indicated by Figures 2 and 4, is that participants were more tense from the mere presence of a camera but overtime may forget that they are under surveillance.
- One factor that was held constant throughout the study was the use of fourth therapy sessions.
- The effects of gender on tension were investigated in the study. As demonstrated by Figures 1 and 3, both male clients showed an increase in tension; while both female clients showed a decrease (Fig. 2 & 4). This trend occurred regardless of what camera was used but may be due to the use of a single male therapist.
- A potential confounding variable was the small sample of individuals that participated in the experiment. This sample may not be entirely representative of the population of individuals who receive therapeutic services.
- Based on the findings from this small sample, the size of a video camera does not directly correlate with the levels of tensions demonstrated by clients and therapists in therapy sessions. This brings forth new considerations in determining the most efficient way of capturing the intricate nuances of the client-therapist relationship.

References

- Gottman, J. M., Coan, J., & Woodin, E. (1998). Specific Affect Coding System manual, 20-code version (4.0). Seattle, WA: University of Washington.
- Jewitt, C. (2012). An introduction to using video for research. National Centre for Research Methods; London, England.