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Induced Emotions and Moral Judgement

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Auditory Stimuli and Moral Decisions

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Rationale

- Social Intuitionist Model expresses that moral judgement is caused by quick moral intuitions and is followed by slow, *ex post facto* moral reasoning. (Haidt, 2001)

- Morals can be defined as "concerning or relating to what is right and wrong in human behavior" (Merriam-Webster, 2021).

- Emotions are defined as "instinctive or intuitive feeling as distinguished from reasoning or knowledge" (Lexico, 2021).

- Experiments showed that emotional differentiation was used and deduced judgements to be made by incidental emotions (Cameron et al., 2013).
  - The findings of this study show that through emotional manipulation there is a connection to the emotions one is feeling and the decisions they make.

- The induction of emotions through varying stimuli helps to show that there is a relationship between the manipulation of emotional state of an individual and their decision-making (Cameron et al., 2013).
  - The relationship shows that the emotional state of an individual has some effect on the decisions and moral judgements a person makes.

- There are large inter-personal differences in emotions induced by listening to a piece of music, which result from both the music itself and the participant's own previous and current mental states (Hunter et al., 2010).
  - These inter-person differences are a result of a wide range of influences and include the individuals' prior experiences, their current mood, and a range of other factors both internal to the person and external to them (Daly et al., 2015).

- When considering the piece of music, several models have been proposed for the relationships between musical structure and syntax and both the perceived and/or induced emotional responses of a listener (Daly et al., 2015).
  - Musical descriptors drawn from music theory, such as the tempo or modality, are also factors in predicting the mood resulting from the music.

Hypothesis

We predict that if participants listen to the angry instrumental music (the negative group), then they will be more lenient on the moral judgement survey.

Method

Participants:
- N = 30 college students from the University of Mary Washington
  - Participants were recruited through SONA systems.
  - 67% of the participants identified as female.
  - Majority of the participants were White.
  - Age range was 18–21.

Materials

- To induce emotional states, two pieces of music were played. "Inner Mind Mystique 1" by Masonna and "Morning Mood" by Edvard Grieg will be used for inducing emotion in the experiment groups.

- Moral judgement scenarios concerning marriage, consensual sex, race, driving, and honesty were pulled from Schnall's study

- Participants rated their judgement on a scale (1-being morally wrong to 10-being perfectly fine).
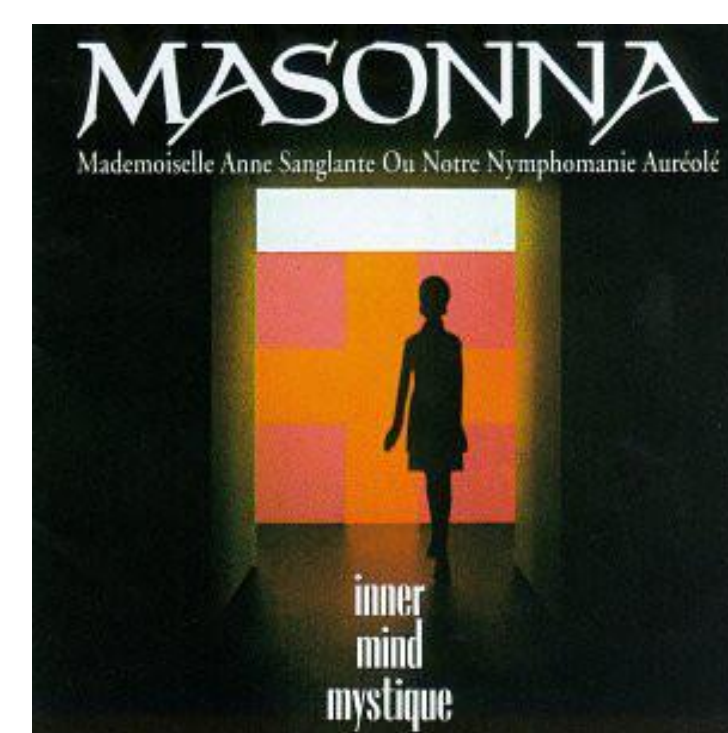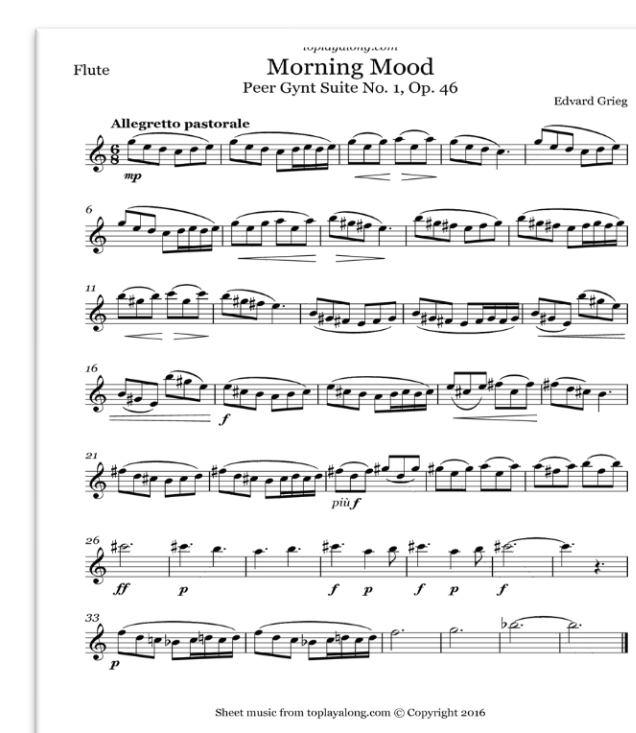
Procedure

- Participants were invited to participate in an in-person survey through the SONA system.
- In the in-person study, participants were randomly assigned to different groups.
  - "Inner Mind Mystique 1" by Masonna, which was meant to induce negative emotions.
  - "Morning Mood" by Edvard Grieg, which was meant to induce positive emotions.
  - Control Group did not listen to music.
  - The participants listened to music for 60 seconds.
- Each participant answered a manipulation check survey to demonstrated the efficacy of the manipulation/induction (Siedel & Prinz, 2013)
- Afterwards, the participants answered hypothetical vignettes based on morality (Schnall et al., 2008).
  - There were 5 items in the vignettes to assess the moral judgements of the participants.
  - The participants rated their answers on a scale 1 (morally wrong) to 7 (perfectly ok)
  - Example item: James is going to work and considers whether to walk the 1½ miles or to drive in. He is feeling lazy and decides to drive in. How moral or immoral do you, personally, find James's decision to be?
  - Seven subscales: morally wrong, wrong, slightly wrong, neutral, slightly ok, ok, perfectly ok.
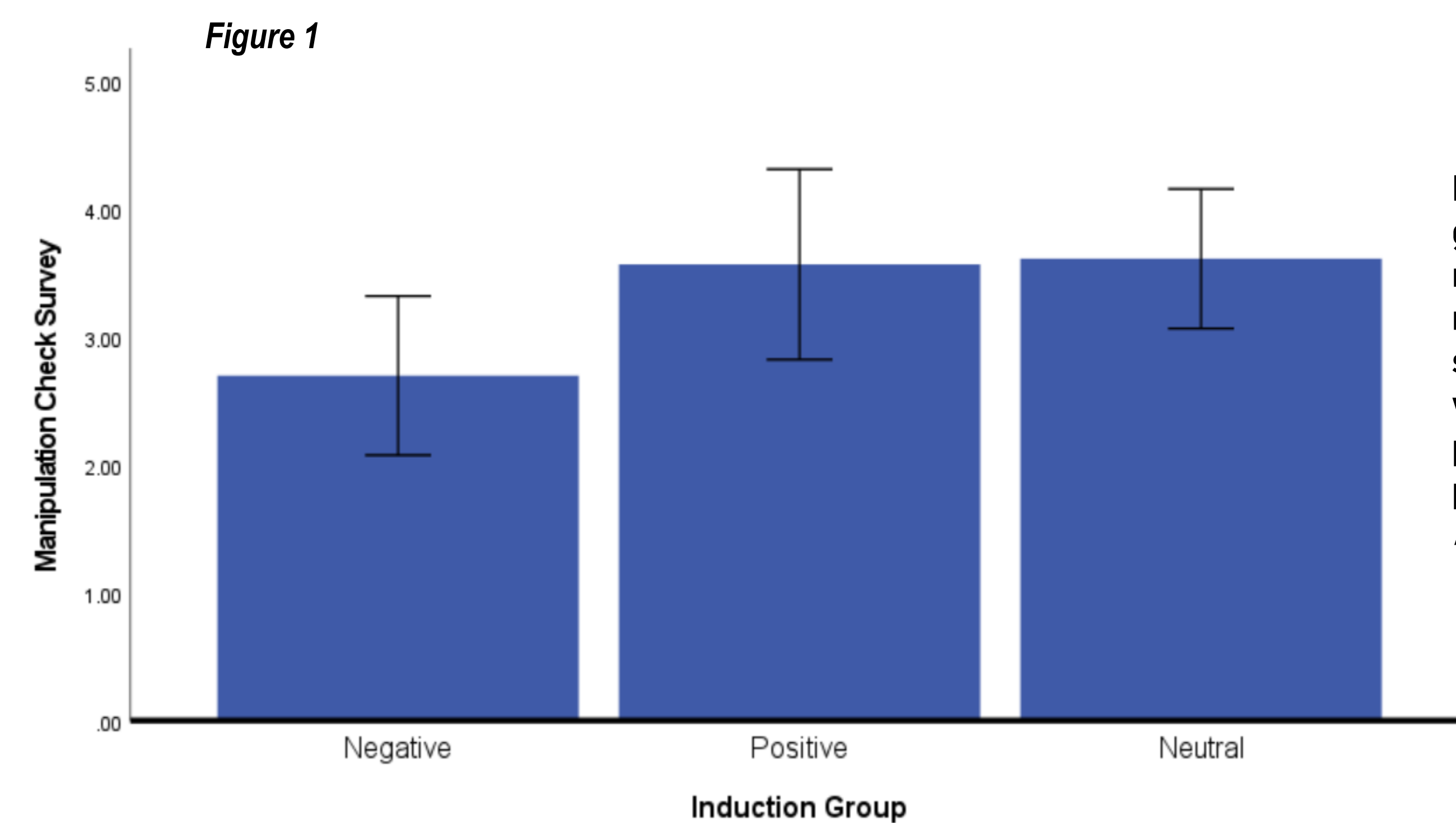
Results

Figure 1

Figure.1 The bar graph shows the results of the manipulation check survey depending on what group the participant was placed into. *p* = .070, *F*(2,30) = 2.93
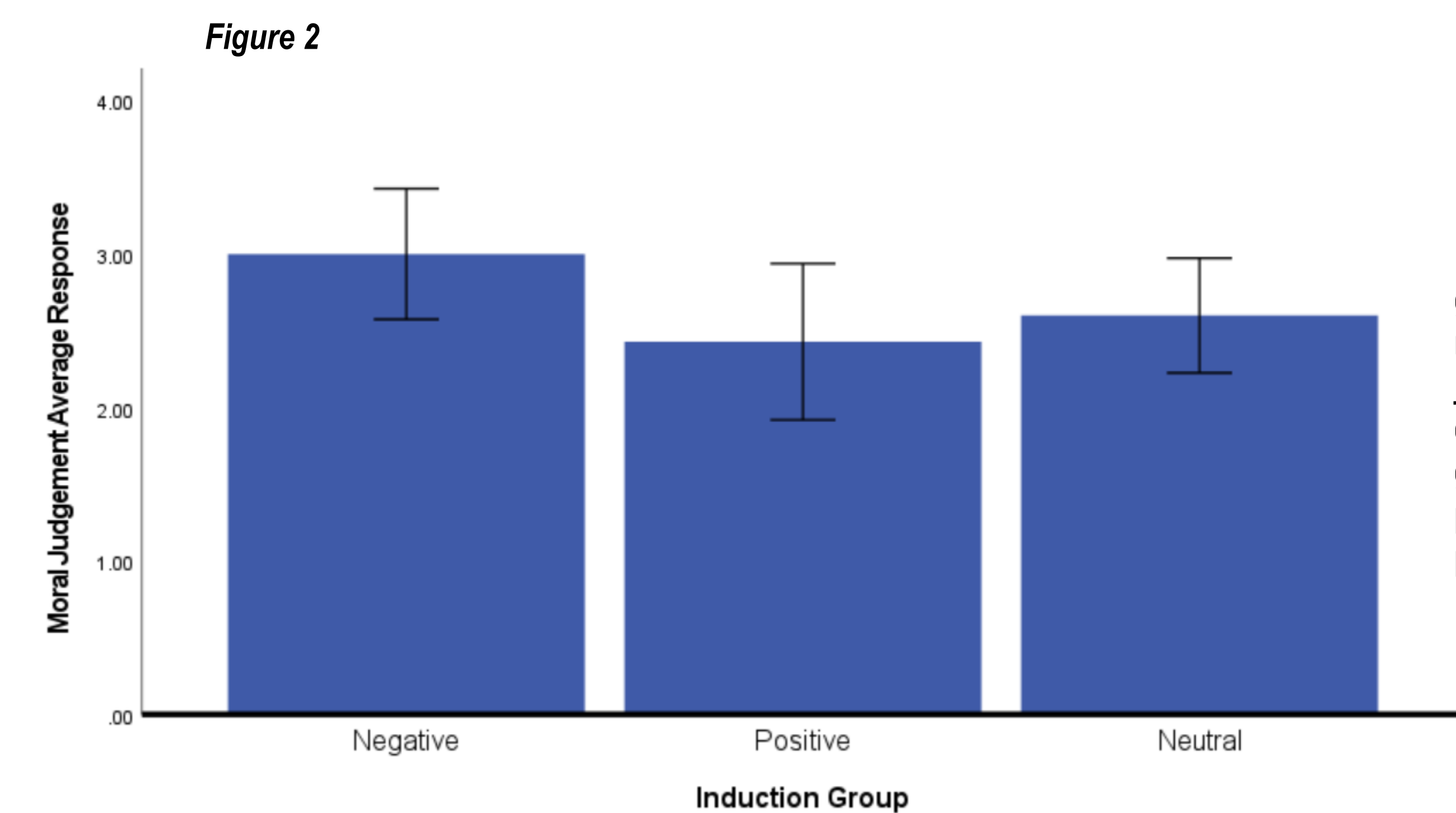
Figure 2

Figure.2 The bar graph shows the results of the moral judgement survey depending on what group the participant was placed into. *p* = .186, *F*(2,30) = 1.79

Discussion

Interpretation
- In this study, the results indicate that there is no significance between the musically induced groups and the moral decisions made in the surveys.

Limitations
- Due to the lack of participants, the results cannot confirm a true significance.
- The lack of supplies provided in our experiment did not allow for an equal distribution throughout the three groups.
- Human error and "no-shows" contribute to the lack of data in our experiment. As discussed, the lack of participants resulted from individuals not showing up to the experiment.

Take Aways and the Future
- Include more participants in our experiment to increase power.
- If individuals differentiated their emotions from their morals, they would have these tools to make rational and clear decisions.

References

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