Depression and anxiety symptoms in young adults correlate with greater affective sensitivity to emotional schema acquisition

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Introduction & Methods

Background:

- Little is known about emotional schema learning and how anxiety and depression symptoms may relate to it

- Fear conditioning research finds that higher anxiety correlates with impaired discrimination between safety and threat cues

- Depression symptoms are linked to dysfunctional reward learning and blunted arousal to pleasurable stimuli

Objective:

- To investigate the associations between depression and anxiety symptoms and emotional schema acquisition

Pilot Participants:

- 6 college students (18-23 years; 83% women)

- 66% White, 16.5% Asian, 16.5% Multi-racial

Recruitment:

- SONA pool for introductory psychology courses

Online Qualtrics Survey:

- Brief Symptom Inventory

Methods

Figure 1. *Emotional schema categories & subgroups*
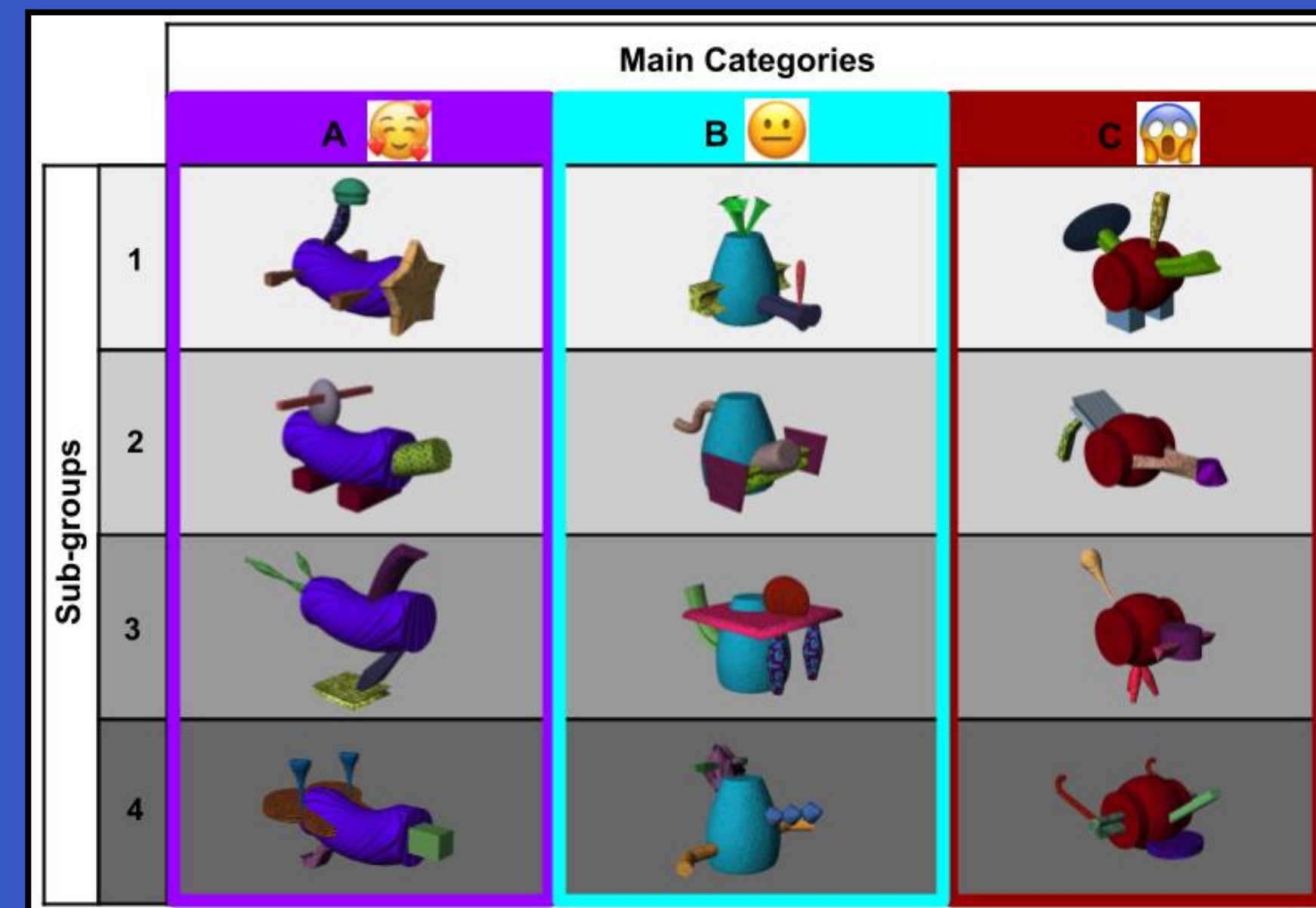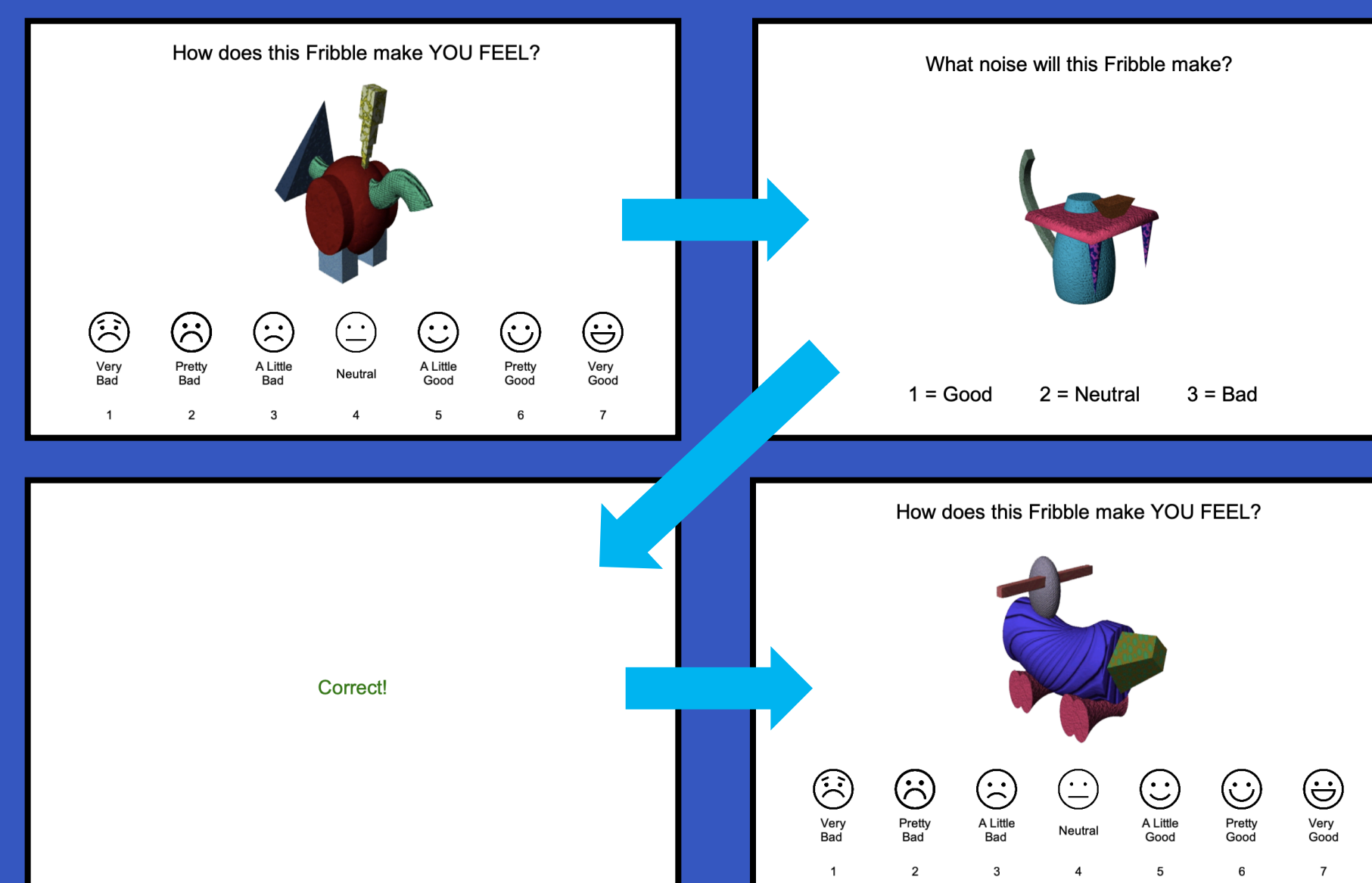

Figure 2. *Emotional schema acquisition task design*

- 36 Fribbles in total
  - 3 blocks of 12 Fribbles each
  - Completed task to 90% accuracy

Results & Discussion

Figure 3a.

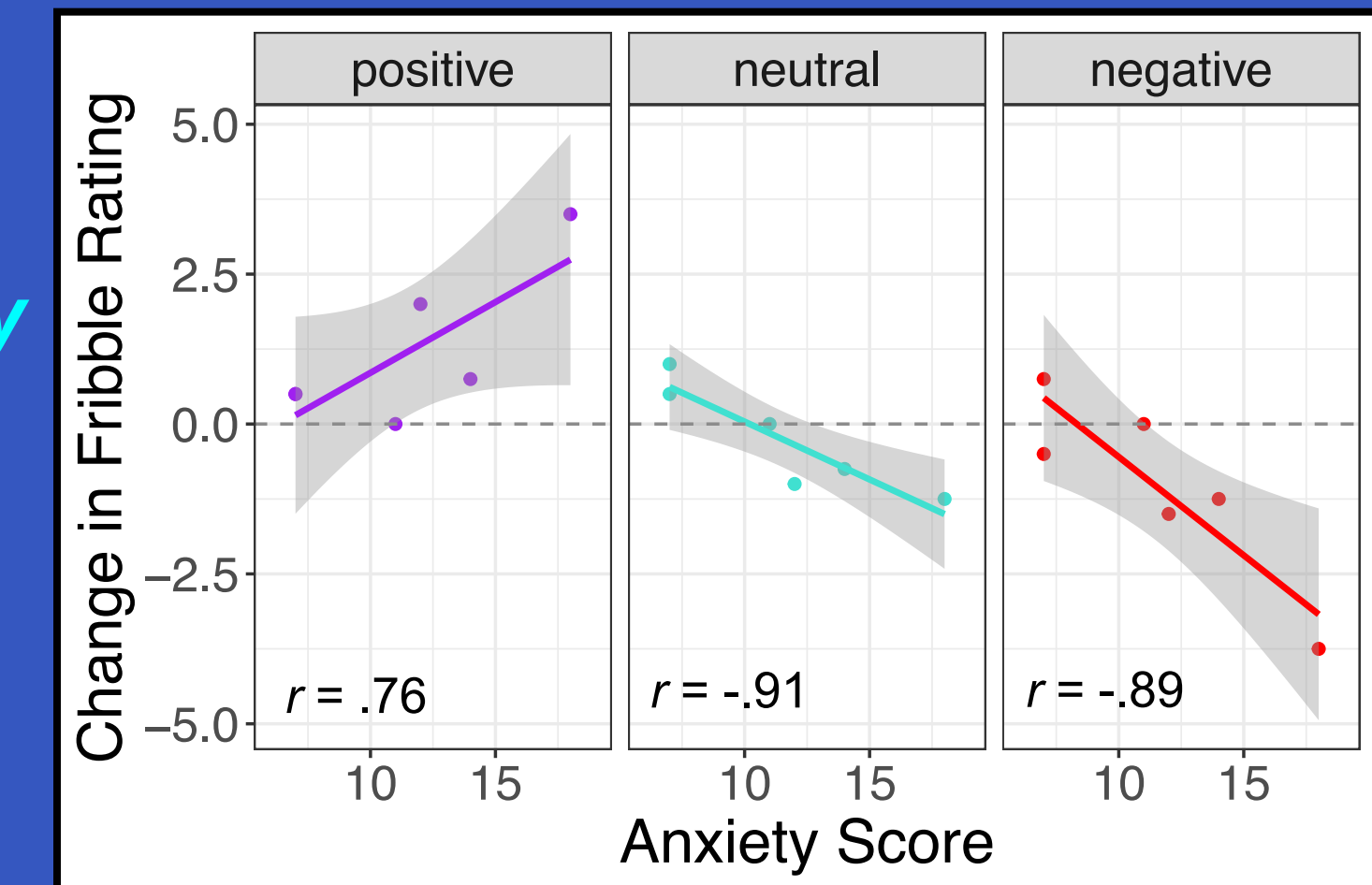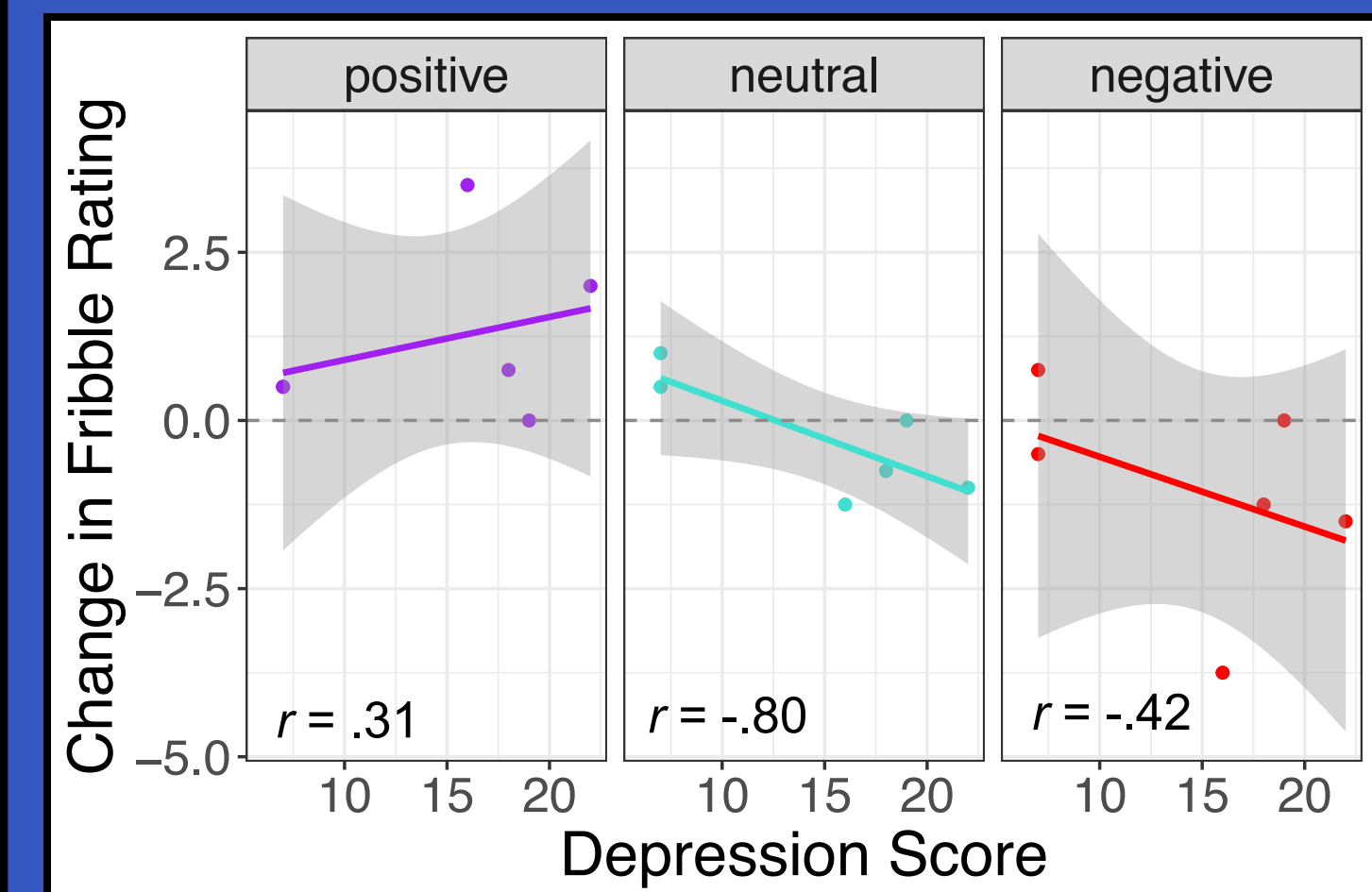***Relationships between anxiety and changes in Fribble ratings***

Figure 3b.

Relationships between depression symptoms and changes in Fribble ratings

Findings:

- Higher depression and anxiety symptoms are linked to rating negative and neutral stimuli as more negative and rating positive stimuli as more positive

- More robust for anxiety compared to depression

Acknowledgements