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Effects of therapist's directiveness on client's satisfaction

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Introduction

Client's Satisfaction

- Client's level of satisfaction during the first session of psychotherapy determines drop-out (Roos & Werbart, 2013).
- How can therapists influence this satisfaction? Do their **behaviors** have an impact?
- The interpersonal approach could be useful to answer this clinical question because the **circumplex model**, based on the two main interpersonal dimensions (agency and communion), conceptualizes how behaviors will impact an interlocutor (Sadler, Ethier, & Woody, 2011).

Agency or Directiveness ?

- **Agency** dimension deals with how much the person is autonomous and in control (Fournier, Moskowitz, & Zuroff, 2011).
- Previous studies in our lab showed that the role of the agency dimension is **ambiguous** in the psychotherapeutic context (Moors & Zech, 2014).
- The concept of **directiveness**, near to the concept of agency (Cooper & Norcross, 2016), could be more specific of the psychotherapeutic context, according to a Rogerian conception.

Research question

- Do the therapist's interpersonal behaviors, and more specifically his **directiveness**, positively influence client's satisfaction during a **first** psychotherapy session?

Hypotheses

- 1) Generally, more satisfaction will be reported with a directive therapist than with a nondirective one
- 2) If we consider the interpersonal profile of the client, a dominant/(nonassertive) client should be more satisfied by a nondirective/(directive) therapist (hypothesis based on the interpersonal complementarity [Sadler and al., 2011]).

Method

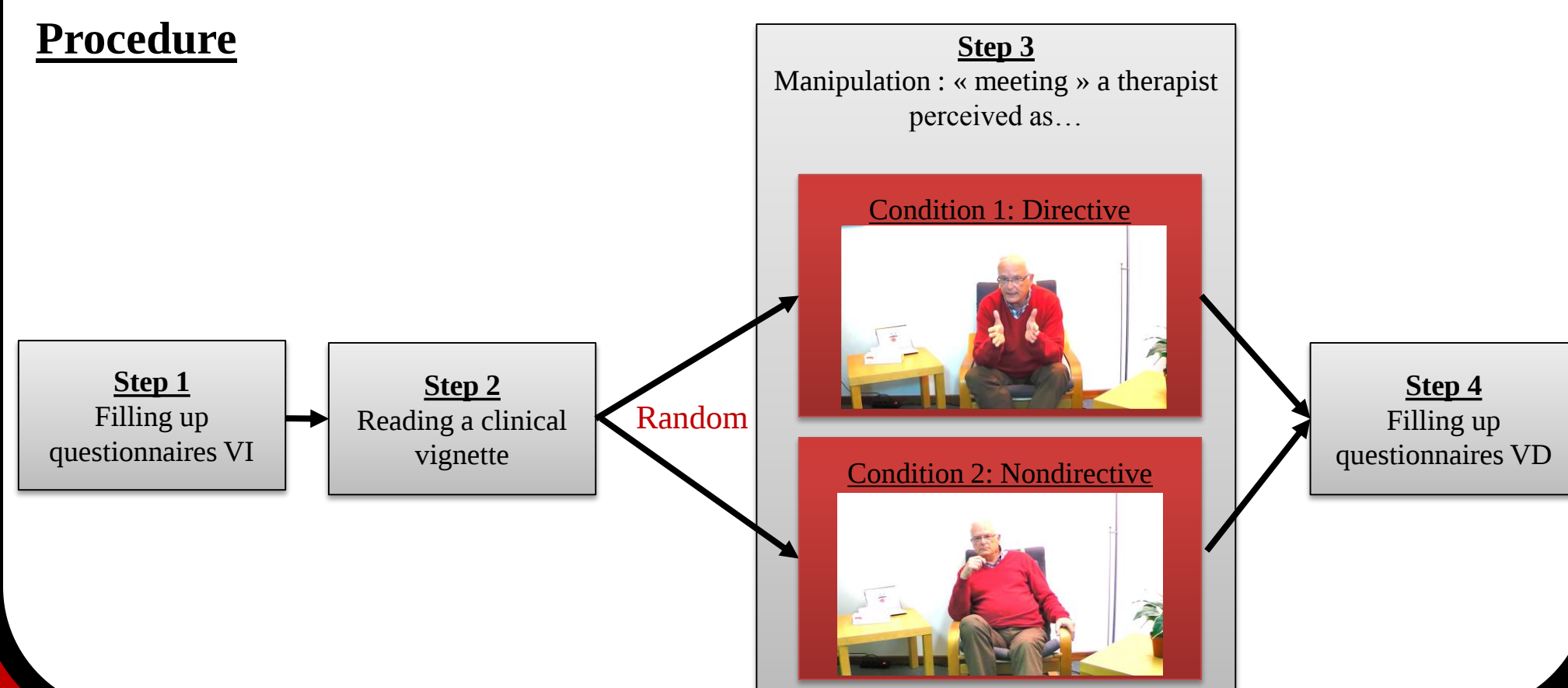
Measures

- For the interpersonal profile of the client: Interpersonal Adjective Scale (Wiggins, 1995)
- The client's satisfaction was operationalized in three way:
 - *General Satisfaction* is the subjective feeling about the session. The items of the subscales "Relationship scale" and "Session evaluation scale" were used (Hill & Kellems, 2002).
 - *Satisfaction about therapist's behavior* is the subjective evaluation about the positive or negative perception about how the therapist behaved. Some representative items of the IAS (i.e., interpersonal adjectives which represent behaviors) were used.
 - *Intend to continue the psychotherapy* is a more concrete measure of the client's satisfaction about his intention to come back.

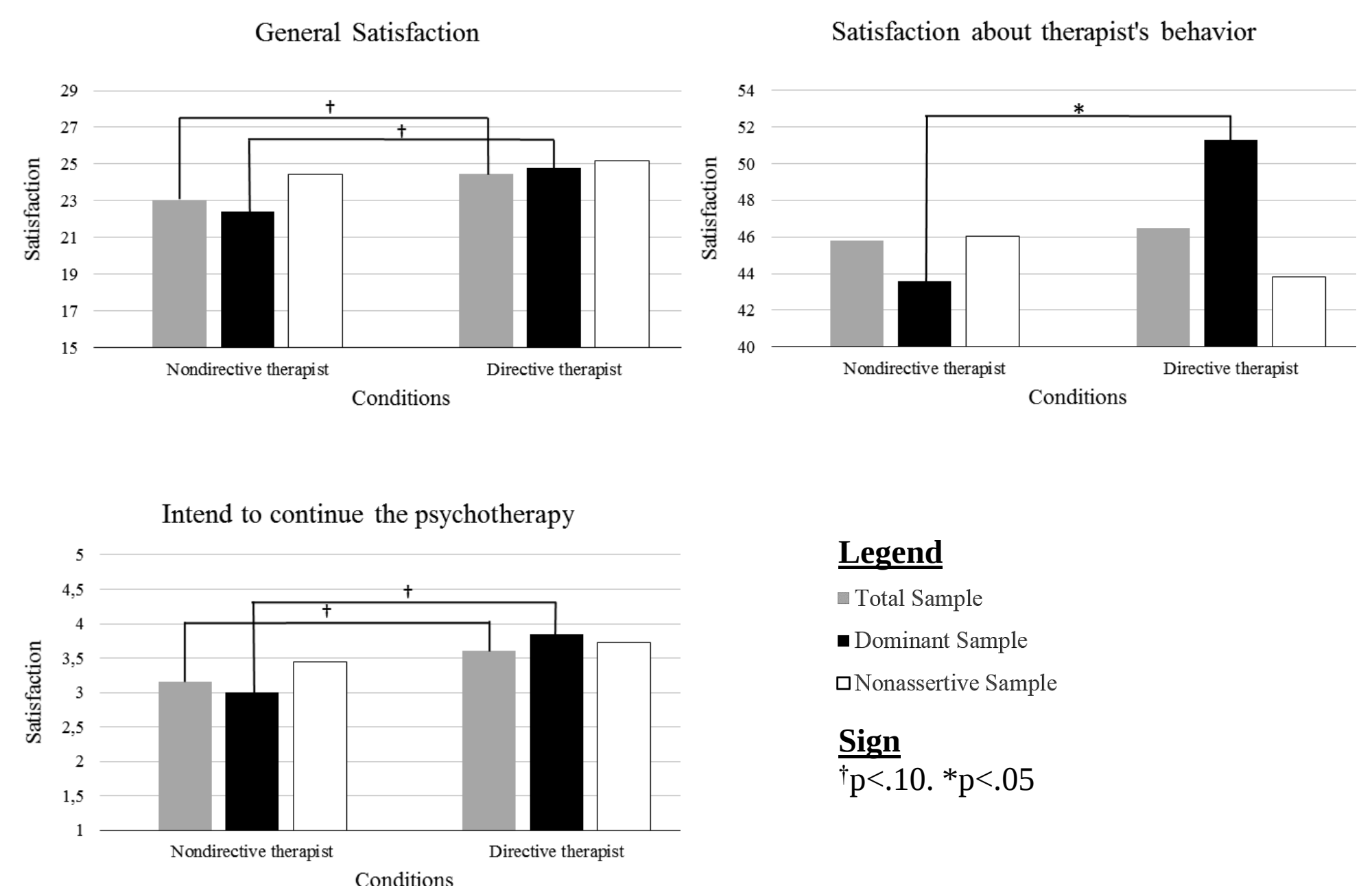
Sample

- Total : N = 107 (31 men and 76 women). Mage = 30.77 ($\pm$ 14.75)
- Dominant : N = 30 (8 men and 22 women). Mage = 32.86 ($\pm$ 13.80)
- Nonassertive: N = 43 (13 men and 30 women). Mage = 33.09 ($\pm$ 17.50)

Procedure



Results



Interpretation

- Hypothesis 1 is confirmed. Generally, clients tend to be more satisfied with a directive therapist.
- Hypothesis 2 is not confirmed. The results show that there is indeed an impact of the client's interpersonal profile on his satisfaction about the therapist's directiveness, but inversely than suggested by the interpersonal complementarity concept.

Clinical Implications

- Globally, we observe that the question of therapist's directiveness is important.
- Our results show that clients tend to be generally more satisfied with a directive therapist.
- Interestingly, when we refine the results by considering the interpersonal profile of the clients, we observe that it is particularly important that, as therapist, we increase our directive behaviors with a dominant client.

Perspectives

- The different measures of satisfaction show different results. It is important to evaluate which kind of satisfaction is the best predictor of a non drop-out
- These results have to be replicated in a more **ecological context** with real clients and therapists to confirm these results
- It is necessary to consider not only the client's evaluation of the therapist's behaviors but his perception of them too.

Discussion

Limits

- N was small to assess that kind of effect (e.g. personality effects)
- It remains an experimentally induced situation (may lack ecological validity)

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