

Abstract

Studies consistently found that rumination both leads to depression and alleviates depression, and these contradicting consequences count on the mode of rumination – brooding and reflection, which differ in degree of problem solving. Theories suggest that having perceived control guides one to attentive and active problem-solving, while sensing absence of perceived control poses passivity in problem-solving. However, the effect of perceived control on mode of rumination is unclear. It is suspected that perceived control affects a person's mode of rumination; as a result mood change is affected. In this study, after sad mood induction, the participants were divided randomly into two conditions to perform a card sorting task: external control and internal control. Contingent reinforcement was given in the 'perceived control' condition whereas random feedback was given in the 'no control' condition. Two groups then completed an expressive writing task to examine the mode of rumination, and mood questionnaire to check mood change. Results found no significant group difference on brooding. However, internal control group significantly showed more reflection than external control group. No significant group difference in mood change was found.

Keywords: Rumination; Brooding; Reflection; Perceived control; State depression