

SEE WHAT YOU WANT TO AVOID

Abstract

Can emotion recognition, an innate ability for understanding others' emotion state, be influenced by motivations? The present research not only confirmed that emotion recognition can be a motivated process but provides evidence for its underlying mechanisms, selective attention and information processing bias. Individuals with high approach motivation direct attention away from negative emotions but less likely fall prey to bias processing without information distraction. People with high avoidance motivation selectively attend to non-positive emotions and negatively bias perceived emotional information. In another word, it seems that individuals who are afraid of failure and rejection tends to pay attention to negative social information and bias them in a more negative way.

Key word: emotion recognition, approach motivation, avoidance motivation, selective attention, information processing bias