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The Mediation Effect of Context for Empathy on Emotion Judgment

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Abstract

This research aimed to study the impact of context on the status of empathy in terms of emotion judgment towards others. Specifically, how empathy would be mediated by different conditions was further investigated. Descriptions of moral/unmoral conditions were designed and hypothesized to influence the status of empathy accordingly. Study participants were instructed to rate pictures using TAPS (Taiwan Affective Picture System) for judging the emotion valence and arousal of human facial expression. As a result, low-level empathy group was found to show an alternation for their emotion judgments on both valence and arousal as the picture context changed, especially in the moral situation. On the contrary, high-level group only show an alternation for their emotion judgments on valence, in the unmoral situation the most. The findings indicated that different status of empathy might be determined the emotion judgments under the contexts where other social cues are presented.