

THE EFFECTS OF EXPECTED EMOTION DIRECTION AND EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION ON SOCIAL DECISION-MAKING

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ABSTRACT

How emotions affect decision-making? Undoubtedly, the problem is one of the top issues in present decision research field. In recent years, with the development of emotion researches in decision research field, researchers have paid increasing attention to emotion's social function and its impacts on interpersonal interaction. Firstly, the orientation of emotion theory research has been changed, the 'Interpersonal Effect' of emotion has been paid more attention than 'Personal Effect'. Based on the new emotion view, the advanced decision theory explains the process of emotional effects on decision-making, especially the 'Interpersonal Effect' of emotion. According to this theory, Van Kleef (2009) built the model of EASI, Emotion As Social Information. This model is the first theoretical model which systematically analyzes the impact of emotional expression on individuals' decision processing. Secondly, social decision-making theory under the interpersonal framework indicates that individuals' decisions will be affected by expected emotion and emotional expression. Expected Emotion is a kind of future-oriented emotion, which generates from the pre-factual thinking, and promised to be experienced in the future. Moreover, emotional expression is a key part in interpersonal interaction. In the social decision-making, emotional expression also has a certain strategic importance. In addition to its signal function, emotional catharsis is its another valuable character. In social decision-making, emotional expression could promote the rational behaviors through the emotional catharsis. Finally, the reasons of social preference have been good explained by the previous researches in social decision area. In the future, the next step of this area will be exploring and expanding the applications, such as developing the training program to help people to make more effective and more rational decisions in their social life.

According to previous researches' results and short-comings, and based on our previous researches, this research aims to solve the following two problems. One is to investigate how the two different expected emotion directions affect the fairness of the proposals in social decision-making, the other is to investigate the role of emotional expression in social decision-making process.

This research adopted experimental method and interviewing method, set up two conditions to compare the impacts of different expected emotion directions on individual decision-making. Moreover, according to the expected emotion effect, this research tested the assumptions that after doing unfair proposal whether self-directed expected emotion could arouse regret, and whether others-directed expected emotion could arouse guilt. We checked whether the participants who played as the respondents in the Ultimatum Game would accept unfair proposal after their emotion expressed.

Through this setting, emotional information expression maybe perform the equivalence with refusal behavior, and then this will further reflect its valuable role in decision-making. In study 1, researchers used the social-value orientation questionnaire to screen out 32 individualist participants (Male=7, Female=25, Mean Age=21.55) from 92 students in Sichuan Normal University. Then they were engaged in the Ultimatum Game and the Dictator Game as dividers/proposers. Every task had two rounds. One was under the self-directed expected emotion condition, and the other was under the others-directed one. In study 2, 29 participants (M=8, F=18, Mean Age=22.48) were engaged as respondents in the Ultimatum Game. After deciding whether to accept the unfair proposals, the respondents were allowed to write a message to express what they'd like to say to the proposers. Then they were asked again whether to accept the last proposal, that was in order to test the equivalence between the emotional expressions and refusal behavior in the Ultimatum Game.

The results showed in study 1: (1) In two tasks, there are no significant impacts of expected emotions showing on the process of decision-making, neither under the self-directed condition nor the others-directed one; (2)The self-directed expected emotion could not maximize the benefits. Some participants expected themselves' emotion. But they mainly reported the satisfactory feeling without any regret; (3)The results showed that other-directed expected emotion mainly stimulated the rational cognitive processing in Ultimatum Game, while more guilt occurred in Dictator Game, and assumptions were verified, participants who felt guilt would make more altruistic decisions. In a word, the results in study 1 partially supported previous research's assumptions. In study 2, the results suggested: Feedback condition improved the frequencies of acceptance of all unfair proposals. Above all, two studies could conclude: (1) In Ultimatum Game and Dictator Game, self-directed expected emotion could not promote more selfish proposal. However, others-directed expected emotion could promote partially more altruistic allocation in Dictator Game. (2) Compared with non-feedback emotional expression, the emotional feedback could reduce the rating of rejection in unfair proposal condition. (3) Emotional expression with feedback could improve the rating of acceptance of unfair proposal with different levels.

To a sum up, the research finally showed that: (1) People's short-sighted behaviors blocks their more effective decisions in social decision-making. Although study 1 could not completely consist with the assumptions, it showed clearly that individuals made decisions without thinking of the impact of decision on self-future emotion, which was so-called short-sighted behaviors. The fact suggested that people should be encouraged to experience the self-directed expected emotion before making decisions if they were trained to develop the ability of making social decisions. In this way, the decisions made by people could be more rational and effective. (2) Appropriate emotional expressions will help to improve ability of making effective ecological rational decisions. Previous researches in social decision-making area have already indicated that individuals would take the revenge actions if they suffered unfair treatments or felt self-respect get hurt. This research found that emotional feedback could reduce the behaviors of rejection to the unfair proposals. This result suggested that people should take the appropriate and effective emotional expression in social life when they suffered unfair treats. It is important for individuals to take strategies to manage self-emotion condition instead of behaving within non-rational thinking. Moreover, it has direct value on clinical psychological counseling and guidance.

Keywords: Expected emotion, Emotion expression, Social Decision-making, Feedback