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Uncertainty

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1.1 Appraisal dimension of uncertainty (see *appraisal*).

Definition: A cognitive appraisal dimension that represents the extent, if at all, to which individuals perceive situations as predictable, understandable, and assured. (Ellsworth & Scherer, 2003). Some emotions (see *anger, happiness*) are associated with greater certainty, whereas other emotions (see *fear, surprise*) are associated with greater uncertainty (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). Emotions with high levels of uncertainty have been linked with increased depth of information processing (see *levels of processing*) and increased perception of risk. By contrast, emotions with high levels of certainty have been linked with decreased depth of information processing (Tiedens & Linton, 2001) and decreased perception of risk (Lerner & Keltner, 2001).

1.2 Judgment under uncertainty (see *judgment*)

Definition: A judgment circumstance in which the probabilities associated with potential outcomes are unknown (see Knight, 1921). Judgment under uncertainty is commonly distinguished from judgment under risk, which describes a circumstance in which the probabilities associated with potential outcomes are known. In a classic paper, Daniel Ellsberg (1961) argued that people prefer to avoid uncertain situations (in which probabilities of potential

outcomes are unknown) in favor of risky situations (in which probabilities of potential outcomes are known) and that the desire to avoid uncertainty can lead to inconsistent preferences. This pattern of inconsistent preferences, termed the “Ellsberg paradox,” received great attention in economics and psychology because it highlighted a preference pattern that violates rational economic standards.

References

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