

Construal Level Theory and its Role in Shaping Negative Affective Expectations: An Extension from the Rosy View Phenomenon

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Abstract

According to the rosy view phenomenon, individuals often remember events such as vacations or leisure trips more positively than they were in reality because positive expectations shape the subsequent recall of these events. Despite various theoretical propositions, an understanding of the rosy view phenomenon is missing in previous research. This study proposes the Construal Level Theory (CLT) as a parsimonious explanation for the rosy view effect and examines this notion using a longitudinal survey. Furthermore, this study investigates whether the CLT operates similarly for consumer experiences with positive and negative affective expectations. Using a scenario experiment and automated text analysis, we find that a general principle of the CLT, which states that mental representations of events become more abstract with increasing temporal distance, is violated for events with negative expectations. Overall, our findings test an explanation for the rosy view effect and identify an important boundary condition for the CLT.

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