

ABSTRACT

THESIS: Exclusion to Impression: A Quest for Reaffiliation

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In situations following social rejection, individuals experience changes in their behaviors, cognitions, and emotions. Documented consequences of social threat have included the need for social connection, a hypersensitive ability to detect social cues, and a preference toward positive information. The present work investigated this unique perspective, specifically exploring how the consequences of rejection influence social judgments (i.e. first impressions). In an experimental design, participants (excluded, included, and control conditions) reviewed facial stimuli (happy, neutral, and angry expressions), ultimately forming trait-based judgments on personality. Group differences in personality ratings, rating accuracy, degree of confidence, desire to affiliate, perceived similarity, and degree of likability were investigated. Results revealed excluded individuals are more confident in their personality predictions than participants in the other two conditions. There were no significant differences between the three groups in accuracy of those judgments, need for affiliation, or bias toward positivity.