

ABSTRACT

Consuming with Others: Social Influences on Moment-to-Moment and Retrospective Evaluations of an Experience

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Two studies examine differences in participants' moment-to-moment and retrospective evaluations of an experience depending on whether they are alone or in the presence of another person. Findings support our hypotheses that joint consumption leads to similar patterns or "coherence" in moment-to-moment evaluations and that greater coherence leads to more positive retrospective evaluations. We trace the emergence of coherence to processes of mimicry and emotional contagion in study 1 by comparing evaluations for pairs of participants who could see each other's expression with pairs who could not see each other, and in study 2 by coding participants' facial expressions and head movements for direct evidence of contagion and empathy.