

DESCRIPTION FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC

In this project we want to focus on sadness, which is one of the least represented emotions in the scientific literature (as well as in contemporary culture). Sadness is a diverse state, which is difficult to categorize only as a negative emotion. In our study we propose the innovative view on sadness as an emotion which can have different motivational dimensions.

We aim to verify, if in some situations, sadness can enhance our will for action taking - for example, when we want to regain somebody we love (then we will call it the high approach sadness), or when it makes us feel helpless and lacking the energy for taking actions (we will call it low approach sadness).

In study 1 we will investigate how these two types of sadness (low and high approach) will change the temporary brain activity, by measuring electrical activity of the brain (EEG) in the prefrontal areas, which are closely related to emotion processing. In study 2 we aim to explore the cognitive consequences of those two states. To do so we will use the Eye-tracking, which measures the eye-movements. Based on obtained results we will assess if there was a difference in breadth of attention between those two groups.

We assume that people experiencing high approach sadness will have more activation in left prefrontal cortex and will have narrower attentional span (will look more narrow), while people in low approach motivation will have more right-sided brain activation and broader attentional span.

This approach to sadness is new and extremely relevant, as it gives much broader perspective to motivational aspects of this emotion. Recently there is a major repression of sadness in the public discussion, which can cause our inability to fully benefit from the role it plays for our mental health, also in relation to the motivational processes.