UC Merced

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society

Title
Are There Bad Dual Character Concepts?

Permalink

Journal
Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, 44(44)

Authors
Prochownik, Karolina
Almeida, Guilherme

Publication Date
2022

Peer reviewed

Are There Bad Dual Character Concepts?

Karolina Prochownik
Ruhr-University Bochum, Bochum, Germany

Guilherme Almeida
Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, United States

Abstract

Dual character concepts have recently received significant attention from experimental philosophers. They are usually defined as possessing two independent criteria for categorization, each associated with its own sense. One of these criteria is descriptive, while the other is normative. Almost all examples discussed in the literature involve a positively evaluated normative element (e.g., the concept of scientist is associated with the pursuit of empirical truth, something that we value). But can dual character concepts also involve morally bad elements? We report the first evidence suggesting that they can. Our study contrasted pairs of positive and negative concepts (e.g., friend/enemy, joy/sadness) and neutral concepts (e.g., baker). We found that negatively valenced concepts such as traitor, enemy, superficial, or sadness have a dual character. We also observed that positive concepts were significantly more likely to have a dual character than negative ones, but the effect size of this difference was small.