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Setting attentional priorities under threat: effects on inattentional blindness

Gautier Lucas, Normand Alice, & Croizet Jean-Claude

INTRODUCTION

- Experiments using spatial cueing showed that a threat context could lead to:
 - more attention to task-set congruent stimuli
 - less attention to task-set incongruent stimuli
- Aim: replicating focalization effect through a dynamic inattentional blindness paradigm

HYPOTHESIS

- An unexpected stimulus incongruent to the task set would be less detected in a threatening context than in a neutral one

METHODS

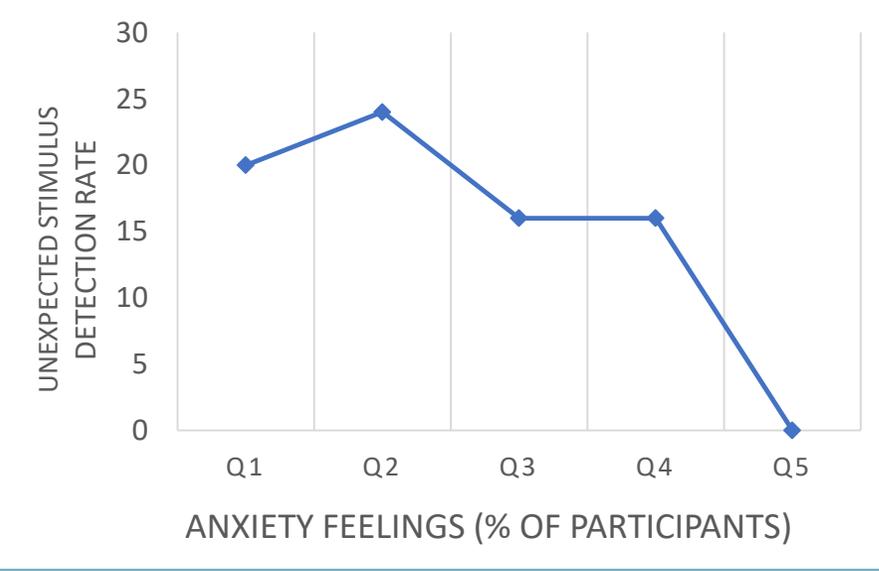
- N = 128 (mainly psychology students)
- Pre-registered
- Conditions: Threat VS Control
- Threat = fear of hearing a 4000 Hz sound in headphones
- Measures: - detection rate
- anxiety feelings

RESULTS

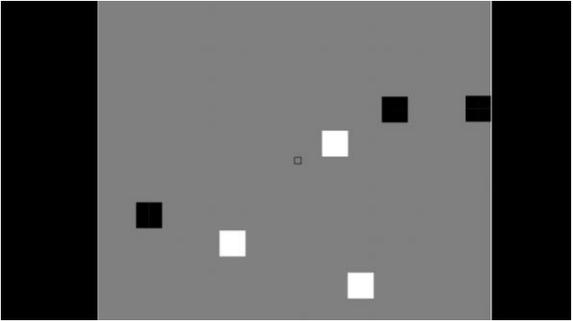
- Effect of threat induction on anxiety feelings
- No effect of threat induction on detection rate
- Effect of anxiety feelings on detection rate

Anxiety feelings (not threat induction) increases inattentional blindness to a task-set incongruent and unexpected stimulus

Condition	Detection rate
Threat	17%
Control	17%

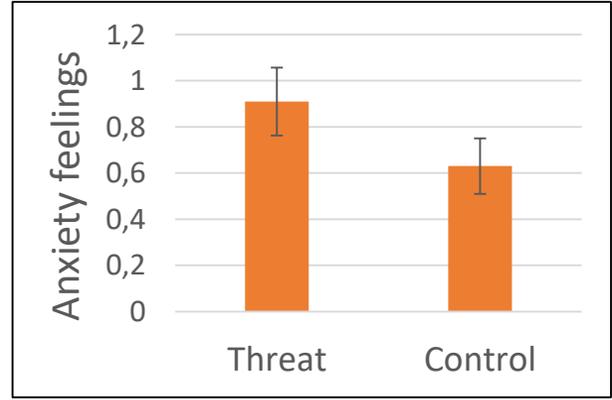


OR = 0.33, IC à 95% [0.10, 0.74], p = 0.025, η² = .047



DISCUSSION

- Results partly support anxiety effect hypothesis on inattentional blindness
- Limitations: need to replicate findings using a more powerful threat induction
- Implications: a threatening situation leads to an anxiety feeling which could be responsible for blindness to external environment
- Future research: explore the second part of hypothesis: a threatening situation results in less blindness (i.e., more detection) to relevant unexpected stimuli



F(1, 126) = 8.495, p = .004, η² = .063