

Article

The Effect of Emotional Understanding on Children's Selective Trust

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Abstract: During early childhood, children rely heavily on information provided by others to construct their understanding of the world. Emotion serves as a critical basis for children when they evaluate the credibility of informants and decide whom to trust selectively. The present study investigated the effects of different emotional cues, varying in emotional valence, on children's selective trust through two experiments. In Experiment 1, facial expression cues of information providers displaying different emotional valences were presented to examine whether the presence or absence of such cues influenced children's trust decisions. In Experiment 2, external situational story cues were introduced alongside facial expressions to explore how combined emotional signals affected children's selective trust. A total of 91 children from a kindergarten in a city in southeastern China were recruited as participants. Data were analyzed using single-sample t-tests. The results of Experiment 1 revealed no significant difference in children's trust toward relatively positive emotional information providers between conditions with and without facial expression cues. Experiment 2 demonstrated that when facial expressions were present, children tended to preferentially select information providers exhibiting relatively positive emotional states across different situational contexts. These findings lead to two principal conclusions: first, when only external emotional cues are provided without facial expressions, different emotional valences do not significantly influence children's selective trust; second, when emotional facial cues are available, children demonstrate a measurable preference for information providers who display relatively positive emotions, suggesting that facial expressions play a facilitative role in guiding selective trust during early development.

Keywords: selective trust; emotional cues; facial expressions; emotional valence; child development

1. The Effect of Emotional Understanding on Children's Selective Trust

Human life is immersed in a continuous flow of information—not only firsthand experiences gained through direct interaction with objects, but also secondhand knowledge transmitted by others. Throughout development, individuals actively receive, evaluate, and relay information within this social environment. Children, in particular, engage extensively in social learning to acquire, assess, and integrate information into coherent cognitive frameworks. However, the volume and diversity of external input mean that children may encounter multiple accounts of the same event or situation, which vary in content and emphasis. Unfiltered acceptance of all incoming information risks cognitive overload [1, 2]. Consequently, developing the capacity to evaluate information sources and exercise discernment in trust allocation serves an important adaptive function during childhood development.

Empirical evidence indicates that children demonstrate consistent preferences when selecting information sources, showing greater reliance on individuals who display domain-specific competence. For instance, they tend to prioritize information from those perceived as knowledgeable or experienced in relevant areas. Recent research has increasingly examined how individual developmental factors shape children's selective

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trust in social interactions [3, 4]. Among these factors, the emotional expressions conveyed by information providers have emerged as a salient influence on children's trust decisions. This raises an important question: when presented with two information providers expressing distinct emotional states, how do children weigh and respond to these cues in forming trust judgments?

1.1. Emotion and Selective Trust

Emotional states influence both behavior and language, and the emotional expressions of information providers differentially affect children's selective trust. Research has examined how varying facial expressions impact trust decisions in young children. In a novel object naming task, two information providers simultaneously assigned different labels to an unfamiliar object—one displaying a happy expression and the other an angry expression—while 3- to 5-year-old children were asked to choose whom to trust [5, 6]. Results indicated a consistent preference for providers exhibiting positive emotional expressions. Further findings suggest that the effect of provider emotion on trust judgments strengthens with age, becoming evident even before age five. Children begin forming credibility judgments based on facial appearance as early as age three, and by ages five to six, their evaluations closely resemble those of adults. Notably, for children aged five and seven, angry expressions exert a stronger influence on credibility assessments than happy ones. Similarly, children aged four to five demonstrate greater trust toward providers displaying relatively positive facial expressions.

Two distinct theoretical accounts help explain why children tend to place greater trust in information providers expressing positive emotions [7].

The first account posits that trust judgments reflect an automatic, perceptual response to facial expressions—such as smiling or scowling—rooted in basic social perception mechanisms. This process operates implicitly and places minimal demand on cognitive resources. As direct visual emotional cues, facial expressions are rapidly detected and processed. Evidence from infancy indicates that differential trust responses to emotional faces emerge very early: in visual cliff experiments, infants typically refrain from crossing when mothers display fearful or angry expressions, yet most proceed confidently when mothers convey happiness or expectation [8, 9]. In another paradigm, infants showed increased avoidance of neutral objects when adults displayed negative expressions, whereas they approached such objects at above-chance levels when adults exhibited positive expressions.

The second account proposes that preschool-aged children, much like adults, interpret facial expressions as meaningful signals conveying underlying traits [10]. A smile is commonly understood as indicating sincerity and friendliness, while anger signals unfriendliness or aggression. Thus, trust judgments may reflect deliberate trait inference rather than automatic perceptual responding. This capacity—termed emotional understanding—entails interpreting emotional cues in relation to contextual information. Such inference requires mental representation and reasoning about others' psychological states, thereby engaging cognitive resources. Some studies have treated smiling as an indicator of perceived friendliness and found that children preferentially trust providers judged to possess this trait.

Collectively, existing research has predominantly investigated emotion's influence on selective trust through visually presented facial expressions [11]. However, if children receive only verbal or descriptive emotional information about a provider—without seeing the corresponding facial expression—do the established patterns of emotional influence persist? Does children's trust rely primarily on conceptual understanding of emotional meaning, or is it fundamentally driven by immediate perceptual responses to facial affect?

1.2. Emotional Understanding

In fact, as early as two and a half months after birth, infants demonstrate emerging capacities for emotional perception. They can distinguish facial expressions corresponding to happiness, anger, and sadness. By 7–9 months of age, infants are able to

reliably match adult facial expressions with corresponding emotional states such as happiness or sadness. As children grow and engage in increasingly complex social interactions, recognizing facial expressions alone becomes insufficient. Accurate social functioning requires interpreting contextual cues and situational factors that give rise to emotions, inferring others' internal affective states, and adjusting behavioral responses accordingly [12]. Developmental research indicates that children progressively acquire knowledge about the relationships among situations and emotions, desires and emotions, and interpersonal trust and emotional responses. Around age three, children understand that story characters typically feel happy upon receiving a long-awaited object, but experience sadness when an expected item is replaced by an undesired alternative. By age four, children can generally infer a character's emotional state based on external situational information.

Thus, emotional understanding advances to increasingly sophisticated levels with development, including the capacity to recognize, interpret, and respond appropriately to nuanced emotional experiences. Children begin to grasp situation–emotion links from approximately three years of age and can identify characters' emotions within described contexts. From age six onward, they recognize that a single event or object may elicit multiple co-occurring emotional responses [13]. However, studies also indicate that understanding certain negative emotional states—such as deep sadness or grief—remains challenging for young children. Overall, emotional understanding continues to mature throughout childhood. In experimental paradigms involving preschool-aged children (4–5 years), researchers commonly use narrative scenarios grounded in prior experiences to convey a character's current emotional state. For instance, one scenario describes a child bringing a new toy to school, only for it to be intentionally damaged by peers; another depicts a child constructing a block structure that is subsequently disrupted by another child—both designed to evoke and communicate feelings of anger.

Yet findings across studies are not uniform [6]. Research involving children aged four to ten suggests that the ability to reason about stable psychological traits underlying behavior emerges gradually, reaching adult-like proficiency only around age ten. This implies that younger children rely more heavily on observable, surface-level cues rather than integrating multiple sources of emotional information. Four-year-olds often struggle to coordinate situational context with emotional and behavioral responses, tending instead to view emotions and behaviors as relatively fixed and predictable based on prior instances.

Accordingly, a central question arises: To what extent does children's emotional understanding depend on perceptible external cues versus integrated interpretation of multifaceted emotional information? Furthermore, how might such understanding influence subsequent judgments, including decisions about whom to trust?

1.3. The Current Study

This study examines how emotional cues influence trust decisions among children across distinct developmental age groups, employing two complementary experiments. Study 1 investigates how externally conveyed emotional valence—introduced via narrative situational cues describing information providers' emotional states—affects selective trust. It is hypothesized that younger children will not differentiate trust based solely on external emotional valence cues, whereas older children will demonstrate a preference for trusting providers associated with relatively positive emotional contexts. Building upon these findings, Study 2 introduces concurrent visual emotional cues—specifically, facial expressions of information providers—to assess whether both younger and older children exhibit increased trust toward providers displaying relatively positive emotions. The design enables systematic comparison of how modality (narrative vs. facial) and developmental stage jointly shape trust judgments, with the expectation that direct emotional facial cues will elicit valence-consistent trust preferences across both age groups [4].

2. Experiment 1

2.1. Methods

2.1.1. Participants

Drawing on established methodologies in developmental research on children's trust in testimony, Experiment 1 recruited 49 children from a kindergarten in Hangzhou, China [14]. The sample comprised 24 five-year-old children (mean age = 4;2 years, SD = 3 months; 12 female) and 25 six-year-old children (mean age = 6;3 years, SD = 4 months; 11 female). One four-year-old child was excluded for failing to respond correctly to the control question. The kindergarten serves a predominantly middle-class community, consistent with national urban household income levels reported in recent demographic surveys. Prior to data collection, the study protocol was explained to the school principal and classroom teachers, and formal consent was obtained. Each participating child received two stickers upon completion of the experimental session.

2.1.2. Materials

The characters are depicted using cartoon images. To minimize the potential influence of the cross-race effect, all cartoon characters are illustrated with short black hair.

2.1.3. Procedure

The entire experiment was conducted one-on-one between the experimenter and each child in a quiet, controlled environment [12]. The experimental design comprised two emotional context conditions: positive-neutral and negative-neutral. Participants were randomly assigned to begin with either condition. Each condition consisted of four sequential phases: introduction, baseline assessment, familiarity induction, and post-test (see Figure 1).

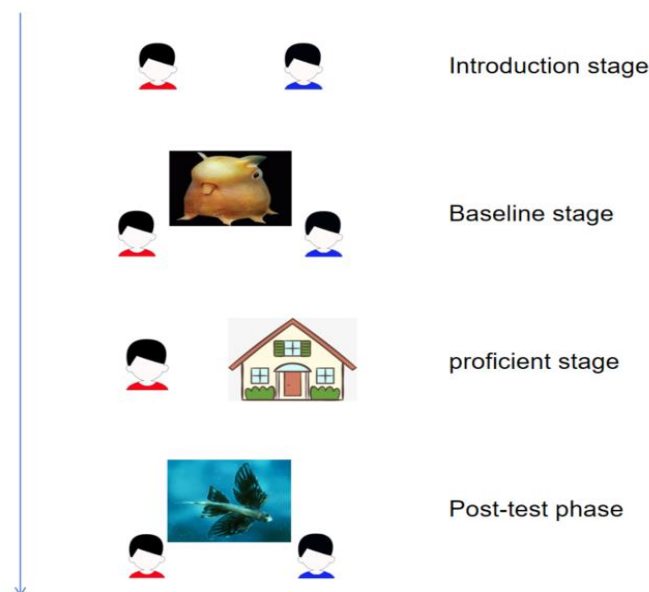


Figure 1. The Procedure of Experiment 1

During the introduction phase, two cartoon characters with blank facial features appeared on the computer screen, each wearing distinctively colored clothing [6]. The experimenter introduced them to the child as follows: 'You see two children on the screen—this one wearing red is called Xiao Hong, and this one wearing blue is called Xiao Lan. Both are very knowledgeable.'

Following the introduction, participants entered the baseline assessment phase. In this phase, children completed a single novel animal naming trial. A previously unseen animal image appeared on screen, accompanied by an instruction: 'Today we are playing a game called What Is This Novel Animal? You will see some animals you may not have

seen before, but these two children will help you learn their names [4]. Look—do you know what this animal is called?' If the child provided a name, the experimenter responded that the animal is not called that; if the child responded 'I don't know' or shook their head, the experimenter immediately posed the first trust question: 'One of these two children knows the correct name—whom would you like to ask?' After the child indicated a preference, the experimenter presented the second question: 'Xiao Hong says it is called Biyi, and Xiao Lan says it is called Miduo. Which name do you think is correct?' The labels used in the agreement question were phonologically plausible but semantically meaningless. Responses were recorded via verbal report or directed action, and all reactions were systematically documented.

Upon completion of the baseline assessment, the two blank-faced cartoon characters reappeared on screen, and children received contextual information about the emotional states of the two informants. Two emotional contexts were employed: positive–neutral and negative–neutral. Participants were randomly assigned to one of these contexts first. In the positive–neutral condition, children were told about an event likely to elicit positive affect in one informant and a neutral event for the other [15]. In the negative–neutral condition, children were told about an event likely to elicit negative affect in one informant and a neutral event for the other.

In the post-test phase, children completed two novel animal naming trials. In each trial, a new animal image appeared with the prompt: 'This is a small animal—do you know what it is called?' If the child attempted a name, the experimenter stated that the animal is not named as such and displayed the two blank-faced cartoon characters. If the child responded 'I don't know' or shook their head, the two cartoon characters appeared immediately. The experimenter then asked the first trust question: 'One of these two children knows the correct name—whom would you like to ask?' After the child selected an informant, the second question followed: 'Xiao Hong says it is called Feipu, and Xiao Lan says it is called Darth. Which name do you think is correct?' Again, the labels were phonologically appropriate but devoid of semantic meaning. Responses were collected via verbal report or action-based selection. All responses were recorded, and after the final trust choice, children were asked to explain their reasoning.

2.2. Results

In Experiment 1, it was hypothesized that children would prefer information providers displaying relatively positive emotional expressions when presented with providers exhibiting varying emotional cues. Scoring was based on preference consistency: one point was awarded when a child selected the provider expressing positive emotion over one expressing neutral emotion; similarly, one point was awarded for selecting the neutral over the negative emotional provider. Consequently, for each emotional pairing condition across the two experiments, children's total scores ranged from 0 to 2.

Independent samples t-tests were conducted using age group as the grouping variable to compare children's scores across different question types in both experimental conditions (see Table 1).

Table 1. Independent Sample T Test of Children in Different Age Groups in Different Types of Problem Scores

Situation pairing	problem types	t	p	A.D.
Positive / neutral	Asking questions	.76	.45	.21
	The question of approval	-1.29	.20	.22
Negative / neutral	Asking questions	1.46	.15	.22
	The question of approval	-1.73	.09	.19

As shown in Table 1, no statistically significant differences emerged between age groups in trust choices involving information providers with differing emotional valences for either approval or inquiry questions in Study 1. Thus, age did not exert a significant influence on selective trust behavior. When only external emotional cues were available,

children across age groups exhibited comparable patterns of trust selection among providers with varying emotional expressions.

A single-sample *t*-test was performed to assess whether children's average trust-selection scores differed significantly from the chance level of 1. Results indicated that, under conditions where only external emotional cues were provided, children's scores did not differ significantly from the random baseline of 1 across question types (approval/inquiry) and emotional pairings (negative-neutral/positive-neutral), with all *p*-values exceeding 0.05 (see Table 2).

Table 2. Single Sample Analysis Was Performed on Children's Different Types of Problem Scores and Random Level 1

Situation pairing	problem types	M	SD	t	p
Positive / neutral	Asking questions	1.12	.73	1.18	.24
	The question of approval	.86	.76	-1.31	.20
Negative / neutral	Asking questions	1.08	.79	.73	.47
	The question of approval	1.00	.68	.00	1.00

2.3. Discussion

The experimental results indicate that, in the absence of facial expression cues—whether external emotional cues are present or absent—children's trust selections across problem types and situational contexts do not significantly differ from chance level [16]. These findings suggest that both younger and older children rely minimally on emotional valence for trust judgments when facial expressions are unavailable. Consequently, a key question arises: when emotional information is conveyed concurrently with facial expressions, does it modulate children's trust evaluations? This question will be addressed in Study 2.

3. Experiment 2

In Experiment 1, it was observed that the absence of intuitive emotional cues—such as facial expressions—impeded children's ability to infer the emotional valence of information providers solely from external cues, thereby influencing subsequent trust decisions. To further investigate this effect, Experiment 2 builds upon the prior design by presenting facial expression cues during both the familiarity and post-test stages, examining whether children can utilize such cues to interpret the provider's emotional state and modulate their trust choices accordingly.

3.1. Method

3.1.1. Participants

Experiment 1 recruited 42 children to participate in the study: 20 five-year-old children ($M = 4;2$, $SD = 4$ months, 8 females) as the younger group and 22 six-year-old children ($M = 6;2$, $SD = 3$ months, 11 females) as the older group; one four-year-old child was excluded due to failure to answer the control question. Participants were recruited from a kindergarten in Hangzhou and resided in an urban community characterized by middle-class socioeconomic status. Prior to testing, the procedure was explained to the school principal and classroom teachers, and formal consent was obtained. Each child received two stickers upon completion of the experiment [17].

3.1.2. Procedure

The entire experiment was conducted one-on-one between the experimenter and each child in a quiet room. The overall procedure of Experiment 2 closely followed that of Experiment 1, with the addition of presenting emotionally expressive faces of the information providers during both the familiarity stage and the post-test stage. Two scenario types were employed—positive-neutral and negative-neutral—and participants were randomly assigned to one of these scenarios at the outset. Each scenario comprised

four sequential phases: introduction, baseline test, familiarity stage, and post-test phase (see Figure 2).

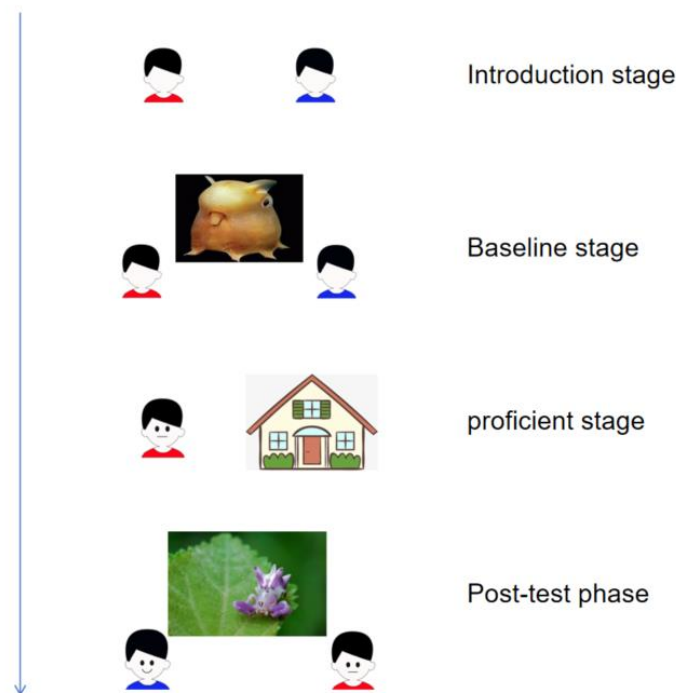


Figure 2. The Procedure of Experiment 2

In the introduction phase, two cartoon characters with blank facial expressions and distinctively colored clothing appeared on the computer screen [6]. The experimenter introduced them to the children as follows: 'You see two children on the screen—one wearing red clothes, named Xiao Hong; the other wearing blue clothes, named Xiao Lan. Both are very clever.'

Following the introduction, the baseline test commenced. Children completed a single novel animal naming trial: a previously unseen animal image appeared on screen, and the child was prompted to name it. The experimenter introduced the task as follows: 'Today we will play a game called What Is This Novel Animal? Some animals will appear on the screen—some you may not have seen before—but these two children will help you find the correct name. Look—do you know what this animal is called?' If the child provided a name, the experimenter responded that the animal is not called that; if the child responded 'I don't know' or shook their head, the experimenter immediately posed the first choice question: 'One of these two children knows the correct name—whom would you like to ask?' After the child indicated a preference, the experimenter presented the second question: 'Xiao Hong says it is called Biyi; Xiao Lan says it is called Miduo. Which name do you think is correct—Biyi or Miduo?' The names used in this confirmation question were phonologically plausible but semantically meaningless. Responses were recorded via verbal report or action-based selection, and children's reactions were documented accordingly.

Upon completion of the baseline test, the two cartoon characters reappeared—now displaying emotionally expressive faces—and the experimenter described contextual events intended to elicit specific affective states in each character. Two emotional contexts were implemented: positive-neutral and negative-neutral. Participants were randomly assigned to one context first. In the positive-neutral condition, children heard about an event likely to induce positive affect in one character and a neutral event for the other. In the negative-neutral condition, they heard about an event likely to induce negative affect in one character and a neutral event for the other.

During the post-test phase, children completed two novel animal naming trials. In each trial, an unfamiliar animal image appeared, and the child was asked: 'This is a small animal—do you know what it is called?' If the child attempted a name, the experimenter stated that the animal is not called that, while displaying the two cartoon characters with initially blank faces; if the child responded 'I don't know' or shook their head, the two emotionally expressive cartoon characters were displayed directly. The experimenter then posed the first question: 'One of these two children knows the correct name—whom would you like to ask?' After the child selected a source, the second question followed: 'Xiao Hong says it is called Feipu; Xiao Lan says it is called Darth. Do you think it is called Feipu or Darth?' Again, the names were phonologically appropriate but devoid of semantic meaning. Responses were collected via verbal report or action-based selection, and children's selections were recorded. Following the final trust decision, the experimenter asked the child to explain their reason for choosing that particular information provider.

3.2. Results

In Experiment 1, it was hypothesized that when children encounter information providers displaying distinct emotional expressions, they would preferentially select those exhibiting relatively positive affect. For scoring purposes, a point was awarded when a child chose a provider expressing positive emotion over one expressing neutral emotion; similarly, a point was awarded for selecting a neutral-emotion provider over a negative-emotion provider [18, 19]. Consequently, across the two experiments and for each emotional pairing condition, children's total scores on different question types ranged from 0 to 2.

Independent samples t-tests were conducted using age group as the grouping variable to compare children's scores across question types in both experimental conditions (see Table 3).

Table 3. Independent Sample T Test of Children in Different Age Groups in Different Types of Problem Scores

Situation pairing	problem types	t	p	A.D.
Positive / neutral	Asking questions	-.74	.48	-.16
	The question of approval	-.38	.71	-.91
Negative / neutral	Asking questions	-.58	.57	-.12
	The question of approval	.42	.68	.09

As shown in Table 3, Study 1 revealed no statistically significant differences among age groups in trust-based selection of information providers differing in emotional valence, whether on approval questions or inquiry questions. Thus, age did not exert a significant influence on children's selective trust behavior. When only external emotional cues were available, children across age groups exhibited comparable patterns of trust allocation toward providers with varying emotional expressions [20, 21].

Children's trust-selection scores were subjected to one-sample t-tests against the chance-level value of 1, with results presented in Table 4. The analysis indicated that, under conditions where only external emotional cues were provided, children's mean scores did not differ significantly from the random baseline of 1 across topic types (approval versus inquiry) and emotional contrast conditions (negative–neutral versus positive–neutral), with all p-values exceeding 0.05.

Table 4. Single Sample Analysis Was Performed on Children's Different Types of Problem Scores and Random Level 1

Situation pairing	problem types	M	SD	t	p
Positive / neutral	Asking questions	1.21	.72	1.94	.06
	The question of approval	.95	.76	-.40	.69
Negative / neutral	Asking questions	1.24	.66	2.35	.02*

	The question of approval	1.05	.70	.44	.66
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Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

3.3. Discussion

The results of Experiment 2 broadly align with prior findings. When children exhibited expression cues during both the familiarization and post-test phases, a statistically significant difference emerged between the negative/neutral condition and chance level; however, the difference between the negative/neutral condition and chance level approached but did not reach statistical significance. Conversely, certain outcomes diverged from earlier work: children's trust selections in the approval task showed no significant deviation from chance level.

4. General Discussions

Two experiments revealed that children do not exhibit a significant preference for trusting information providers with differing emotional valences when only external emotional cues are presented. However, when emotional facial cues are provided, children demonstrate a measurable tendency to trust providers displaying relatively positive emotional expressions [22, 23]. This suggests that children's emotion comprehension relies primarily on intuitive interpretation of facial affect, and such comprehension subsequently influences their trust decisions.

4.1. Differences in the Influence of Emotional Situations on Children's Emotional Understanding

The results of Experiment 1 revealed that children did not exhibit a preference for individuals in relatively positive emotional situations when making trust-related choices—a finding inconsistent with the initial hypothesis that children would be more inclined to trust information providers under positive external cues. This discrepancy may stem from several interrelated factors [4, 24].

First, children begin to comprehend emotion-eliciting situations and identify characters' emotions from around age three; by age six, they can recognize that a single object or event may evoke multiple, even mixed, emotional responses. Although narrative-based emotional scenarios can support such inference, their effectiveness is heavily constrained by children's language proficiency. To mitigate linguistic and cognitive demands, prior methodological approaches have employed dynamic multimodal cues—such as puppetry involving body language, vocal intonation, and facial expression—to convey emotional contexts. Such methods have been shown to facilitate children's accurate interpretation of characters' emotional experiences. In contrast, the present study relied solely on static scene illustrations accompanied by verbal descriptions, imposing greater reliance on receptive and expressive language skills. Consequently, it is plausible that children aged five to six lacked sufficient linguistic capacity to reliably infer characters' emotions from external situational cues alone, in the absence of expressive behavioral indicators. Second, emotional responses to identical situations vary considerably across individuals: what evokes happiness in one child may elicit fear or neutrality in another.

For instance, the scenario 'Xiao Hong goes to school as usual' may be interpreted by some children as evoking positive affect, by others as emotionally neutral, and by still others as prompting sadness or anxiety. Given these individual differences in emotional perception and attribution, the observed lack of consistent preference for positively cued individuals in trust decisions may reflect variability in how children cognitively and affectively process the same situational stimuli—rather than a failure of the underlying theoretical framework.

4.2. Differences in the Influence of Emotional Faces on Children's Emotional Understanding

The results of Experiment 2 align to a certain extent with previous research conclusions. When evaluating information providers displaying different emotional valences, children demonstrate a trust preference for those exhibiting relatively positive emotions.

Regarding the influence of facial expressions on children's selective trust, numerous studies have indicated that children are more inclined to trust information providers displaying relatively positive facial expressions during the selective trust process. In one such investigation, emotional faces were selected from a standardized facial database, and the credibility of these faces was assessed by children aged 5 to 12 years. The findings revealed that 5-year-old children can form clear impressions of credibility based on facial expressions. Angry expressions significantly diminish perceived credibility, whereas happy expressions enhance it [25]. Additional research has similarly found that children between 4 and 5 years of age are more likely to trust information providers with relatively positive facial expressions.

However, the results of this study also present inconsistencies with prior research. Children's trust choices toward information providers with relatively positive emotions demonstrated a significant preference only in the initial inquiry phase, specifically the first question of each trial. This inconsistency may be attributed to deeply ingrained cultural values encountered during children's development. Specifically, the study was conducted in southeastern China, a region more inclined toward collectivist cultural norms. Within such a cultural framework, young children are frequently encouraged to prioritize socially acceptable behaviors over personal interests, fostering a strong emphasis on adherence to community norms [26]. Traditional values prevalent in the region, including deference to authority figures and avoidance of behaviors that may offend unfamiliar adults—such as not selecting them when asked—may further influence children's decision-making processes. This cultural context may lead children to avoid displaying a clear preference for one assistant due to concerns about offending either party. Consequently, when making trust-related choices, children tend to balance their selections among the available trust targets.

5. Conclusion

This study investigated how age, emotional valence, and type of emotional cue—either external situational narratives or facial expressions—influence selective trust in children aged 5–6 years. Two experiments were conducted to examine these relationships, yielding two principal findings:

(1) When emotional information was conveyed solely through external situational cues without accompanying facial expressions, children aged 5–6 did not reliably infer the information provider's emotional state and showed no consistent bias in trust decisions based on emotional valence.

(2) When direct facial expression cues were provided, children in this age group demonstrated a modest but reliable preference for trusting information providers displaying relatively positive emotional valence.

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