

Peer Review

Review of: "The Uncanny Valley Phenomenon: Where Is the Categorical Boundary Between Categorization Difficulty and Categorization Failure?"

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The article "*The Uncanny Valley Phenomenon: Where is the Categorical Boundary Between Categorization Difficulty and Categorization Failure*" provides a thought-provoking commentary on the work by Sasaki et al. (2025). Overall, I found that the commentary did a thorough job of introducing the reader to some of the important theoretical perspectives (categorization difficulty, categorization failure). The commentary here analyzes the explanations provided by Sasaki et al. (2025) while offering alternatives (i.e., the stranger-avoidance hypothesis).

I found the summary of Sasaki et al. (2025) to be clear. The work is recognized for its contributions while also pointing out its reliance on non-significant findings. I agree that direct evidence of categorization failure would make for a stronger argument. Suggesting an alternative hypothesis or explanation was helpful. I agree that the field should emphasize creating respectful dialogue amongst researchers, making efforts to integrate multiple theoretical accounts, and openly discussing alternative explanations for our findings.

I encourage the authors of this commentary to refine the differences between categorization difficulty and categorization failure. Examples and more clarity regarding whether categorization difficulty can lead to these negative reactions without the implication of outright failure would be beneficial. A closer look at the findings of Sasaki et al. (2025) could also better support the argument against the reliance on non-significant findings. What other ways could we demonstrate support or evidence for categorization failure?

Finally, the commentary pushes for further refining and integrating existing theoretical perspectives. I agree that this is a logical next step but wonder if the authors could suggest specific ideas for future research. In sum, the commentary provides a strong argument for refining the similarities and differences between these accounts. This is a valuable initial step toward creating a better understanding of the various categorization processes and their respective mechanisms.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.