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Aging and stereotyping effects on face-name memory

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Introduction

Stereotyping affects memory
→ Self-stereotyping and stereotype threat
  • Automatic
  • Self-relevant
  • Important ability
→ Attitudes towards aging pervasively negative
  • Especially memory
  • Belief in inevitable memory decline with age
  • Value memory & fear memory loss
→ Older adults vulnerable to memory stereotyping
  • Beliefs may moderate stereotyping effects

Feedback and memory
→ Mixed effects reported
  • Complex interaction with beliefs
→ More influential for younger than older adults
→ Positive feedback may be motivating
  • Especially with high memory self-efficacy
→ Unknown effect of negative feedback

Memory self-efficacy
→ Confidence in memory performance
→ Correlated with memory performance
  • Meta-analysis $r = .15$, 95% CI: .13 - .17
→ Predicts memory performance
  • Longitudinally, 6 years later
  • Training self-efficacy improves memory
→ Decreased by negative self-stereotyping
→ Moderates self-stereotyping and feedback effects

The present study
→ Extends previous research on self-stereotyping in domain of aging and memory
  • Performance feedback as mechanism for self-stereotyping effects
  • Role of personal beliefs in explaining responses to feedback
The present study

→ Positive, negative, and no feedback conditions
→ Name memory outcome, relevant & challenging

Methods

Participants
→ Extreme groups design
→ 95 younger adults
  • 18 – 27 years old
  • $M = 19.2$, $SD = 1.3$
  • 72.6% female
→ 83 older adults
  • 68+ years old
  • $M = 73.8$, $SD = 3.9$
  • 72.3% female

Overall design

Mixed-model design
• 2 age (between: YA, OA)
• 3 feedback conditions (between: P, N, C)
• 2 name memory (within: recognition, recall)

Phone screening
30 – 45 min.
Health & demographics
Baseline cognition

Onsite interview
1.5 – 2 hrs.
Face Name Association Task
Beliefs measures

Face Name Association Task

ENCODING
12 face-name pairs
NAME RECALL
6 trials
NAME RECOGNITION
6 trials

Example Positive Feedback

Congratulations!
Your Score: 92th percentile for your age group

FNA = Face Name Association

OA = Older adults, YA = Younger adults, P = Positive, N = Negative, C = Control
Example Negative Feedback

Example No Feedback

Results

(Trend) Test type & feedback condition interaction:
Name recognition similar across feedback conditions, yet trend towards better name recall in positive compared to other conditions

Feedback effect for memory self-efficacy change:
Greater-than-average gains in positive feedback, significantly better than negative and no feedback

(Trend) Feedback effect for subjective age change:
Pos. Ps feeling younger and Neg. Ps feeling older, relative to their actual age

F(2, 172) = 2.79, p = .06, η² = .03

F(2, 172) = 18.11, p < .001, η² = .17

F(2, 172) = 2.66, p = .07
Test type & positive feedback condition interaction:
Better performance for positive than no positive for name recall but comparable performance between groups for name recognition

F(1, 174) = 5.37, \( p = .022 \), \( \eta^2_p = .03 \)

Hypothesized model: Indirect effects of positive FB on name recall through memory self-efficacy and subjective age

Discussion

Feedback and memory

→ Better name recall with positive feedback compared to no positive feedback
  • Similar performance between negative feedback and no feedback

→ Positive benefit of positive feedback
  • Via motivation, encouraging continued effort
  • Protection from negative self-appraisal
    – Comparable low memory evaluations in negative and no feedback conditions

Feedback and beliefs

→ Positive feedback improved memory self-efficacy
  • Greater-than-average gains
  • Sustained pretest to posttest, compared to decline in negative feedback condition

→ Feeling younger relative to one’s own age when receiving positive feedback

West et al., 2009
Conclusion & Future Directions

- Feedback impacts performance & beliefs
  - Similar effects in younger and older adults

Positive FB → Increased self-efficacy → Better name recall

- Negative self-appraisal?
- Training beliefs to promote resilience to stereotype threat effects

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FB = Feedback.