

Psi and the Cognitive Unconscious

Results:

Four studies compared psi processing with “perception without awareness”.

Study 1a looked at what is known as a “false recognition” effect, in which recognition memory is influenced by stimuli presented outside of conscious awareness. After an initial study list, participants took part in an “old/new” recognition task, in which they had to decide whether test words had been presented in the original list or not. Under certain conditions, it was found that presenting the test word outside of awareness could cause participants to “falsely recognise” new words (respond “old” to words they had *not* seen in the study list).

Study 1b looked for a similar effect using psi as a biasing stimulus. Following a study list, participants were given an old/new recognition task. On half of the “new” trials a sender attempted to psychically influence the participants’ recognition memory. No significant main effects were found in either the false recognition data or the response-time data. There was some indication of a gender interaction in both these dependent variables, but these effects were not significant.

Study 2a looked at the effect of psi on word association. A “sender” attempted to influence participants’ interpretation of homophones. The main effect fell just short of significance, though there was a suggestion of an experimenter effect and a response-bias effect.

Study 2b involved “subliminal” stimuli, and employed an exclusion task. The aim was to influence interpretation of homophones by means of an auditory “prime” presented outside of awareness. A variety of signal/noise ratios were used, but no significant effects were found.

Published Work:

Wilson, S (2002) Psi, perception without awareness and False Recognition. *Journal of Parapsychology*, **66** (3) 271-291.

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