

The Effect of Paranormal Belief and Cognitive-Perceptual Factors on Mnemonic Performance: An Experimental Investigation

Results:

Experimental methods were used to explore the relationship between paranormal belief, cognitive perceptual measures (schizotypy, delusional ideation and transliminality) and mnemonic performance. Phase I, employing the Deese-Roediger-McDermott (DRM) paradigm, found that participants scoring above (vs. below) the median for belief in the paranormal and delusional ideation produced higher numbers of false memories for critical lures (associative false memory). Level of paranormal belief and level of cognitive-perceptual factor had no effect upon true memory (presented items), or other measures of false memory (non presented list items and non presented critical lures). Overall, paranormal belief and cognitive-perceptual factor scores were not predictors of mnemonic performance (true and false memory). In addition to this, neither level of paranormal belief, nor level of cognitive-perceptual factor had a consistent effect on the quality of memories as measured by the remember-know procedure. Phase II, using the misinformation effect, found that only level of paranormal belief affected mnemonic performance. Participants in the upper quartile scored higher on true memory and recognised more misinformation items (false memory) than participants in the lower quartile. The cognitive-perceptual measures had no effect on memory. Whilst, positive correlations were observed between signal detection measures of memory (true d' , false d' , and unrelated information) these measures failed to correlate with either paranormal belief, or the cognitive-perceptual measures. Finally, level of paranormal belief and level of cognitive-perceptual factor had no effect on remember-know responses.

Area(s) of interest:

Paranormal belief; memory; cognitive-perceptual personality factors.

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