

The influence of personality traits in predicting information processing and message persuasiveness

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Gray's (2000) revised Reinforcement Sensitivity Theory (r-RST) was used to investigate personality effects on information processing biases to gain-framed and loss-framed anti-speeding messages and the persuasiveness of these messages. The r-RST postulates that behaviour is regulated by two major motivational systems: reward system or punishment system. It was hypothesised that both message processing and persuasiveness would be dependent upon an individual's sensitivity to reward or punishment. Student drivers ($N = 133$) were randomly assigned to view one of four anti-speeding messages or no message (control group). Individual processing differences were then measured using a lexical decision task, prior to participants completing a personality and persuasion questionnaire. Results indicated that participants who were more sensitive to reward showed a marginally significant ($p = .050$) tendency to report higher intentions to comply with the social gain-framed message and demonstrate a cognitive processing bias towards this message, than those with lower reward sensitivity.