

(Abstract)

This study examined the immediate psychological impact of positive and negatively framed driving advertisements on (a) deliberative and consciously reported (explicit) and (b) automatic non-conscious (implicit) self-enhancement biases in driving ability and caution (N=150). Positively framed driving advertisements (those that showed actors modeling safe alternatives to dangerous driving) were most effective at reducing self-enhancement biases in driving ability. This effect was, however, limited to consciously accessible deliberative self-enhancement biases.

Exposure to driving advertisements (either positively or negatively framed) did not significantly alter implicit, automatic self-enhancement biases (measured using a computerized reaction-time task). These findings emphasize that positively framed messages are more effective than negatively framed messages at influencing important psychological processes underlying driving behaviour, although such effects are limited, at least in their immediacy, to deliberative fast-learning (or propositional) processes.

The implications of these findings for understanding the effects of driving advertisements on the different slow-learning and fast-learning social-cognitive processes underlying self-enhancement biases in young drivers' self-perceptions, and hence driver behaviour, are discussed