The P-P-P-Perceptions of St-St-St-Stuttering

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The P-p-perceptions of St-st-stuttering

Principal Investigator: Tiffani Kittilstved
Research Mentor: Dr. Julia Smith
What is stuttering?

- Stuttering affects approximately 68 million people in the world, or about 1% of the world’s population.
- It is characterized by repetitions or prolongations of single sounds, words, and sentences or involuntary silent blocks.
- Different than normal disfluencies.
- Stuttering is not just the physical manifestation.
- This emotional reaction – from stutterer and society - can affect a stutterer’s quality of life.
One study, by Colins and Blood, showed more positive perceptions towards stutterers who self-advertised.
Fluency Shaping vs. Stuttering Modification

**Fluency Shaping**

- Goal is to achieve “fluency”
- Often natural sounding speech is lost, “fluent” speech can sound strained, rehearsed, or otherwise unnatural
- May promote avoidance behaviors (avoiding certain words, sounds, or speaking altogether) due to a fear of stuttering and a perception that it’s not okay
- Very developed and various techniques can be helpful for many

**Stuttering Modification**

- Goal is to address negative emotions and help the stutterer stutter more easily and confidently
- Positively impacts a lot of stutterers, especially for those that do not like fluency shaping techniques
- The Successful Stuttering Management Program,
- Self-Advertising
Self-Advertisement Expanded

- Can the idea of self-advertisement be expanded to improve perceptions?
- Does this technique improve perceptions because of the education of stuttering or the stutterer giving it?
- My research project:
  - Qualitative interviews of a sample that represents my population – 7 EWU students
  - Quantitative surveys of 450 EWU students
    - Control group (230 students) were simply given the survey
    - Experimental group (220 students) listened to a 1-2 minute speech that gave basic information about stuttering
Interview Results – Negative Perceptions Held

- Unintelligent
- Slower
- Disabled
- Unprepared
- Self-esteem issues
- Unapproachable
- Shameful
- Less attractive
- Unfocused
- Quieter/shy
- Withdrawn
- Introverted
- More sensitive
- More frustrated
- Anxious
- Mentally unstable
- Limited in their professional, academic, and daily functioning
- Unsanitary (care less about physical appearance, cleanliness, etc.)
- Fearful
- Embarrassed
- Self-conscious
- Insecure
- Unconfident
- Less (or not) educated
- Guilty
Education about stuttering (like self-advertising) did show improved perceptions.

But mostly not statistically significant ones.
So what were the complications?

My groups weren’t evenly distributed

- Control group was more likely to know someone who stuttered (52% vs. 47%)
- Control group claimed to know more about stuttering than experimental group (average of 2.6 vs. 2.4 on a scale of 1-5)

Outcomes were relatively positive for both

- Perceptions in general were more positive than previous studies have shown
- Experimental Group had more positive perceptions regarding long term perceptions
- Control Group had more positive perceptions regarding first impressions
Statistical Analyses

- “Groups”: Control group vs. Experimental group
- “Familiarity”: Knows a stutterer vs. Doesn’t know a stutterer
- “Exposure”: Experimental group + Control group who knows a stutterer vs. Control group who doesn’t know a stutterer
Differences that were statistically significant:

In the “right direction”:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Significance Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In two of the three</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Anxious or Fearful (long term)</td>
<td>Groups and Exposure</td>
<td>.049 (groups), .026 (exposure)</td>
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<td><strong>In one of the three</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hard to get to know (long term)</td>
<td>Exposure</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not able to perform tasks (long term)</td>
<td>Exposure</td>
<td>.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty in everyday communication (long term)</td>
<td>Exposure</td>
<td>.044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something wrong with them (long term)</td>
<td>Familiarity</td>
<td>.007</td>
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</table>
Differences that were statistically significant:

- In the “wrong” direction

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<tr>
<td>Speaks too quickly (first</td>
<td>Familiarity and Exposure</td>
<td>.016 (familiarity), .006</td>
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<tr>
<td>impression)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(exposure)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>One of the three</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shy or withdrawn (long term)</td>
<td>Groups</td>
<td>.027</td>
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Interesting differences between tests

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<td>Groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shy or withdrawn (long term)</td>
<td>Exposure</td>
<td>.929</td>
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</table>
Further Research

- Updated study on perceptions – more positive?
- Repeat with larger sample size
- Research study with the education being given without stuttering and then with stuttering to determine whether the education is what changes perceptions or the stutterer giving it
- Other ways to change perceptions?
Successful Stutterers

There are many stutterers who are very successful. This disorder does not have to limit people. Changing perceptions of stuttering is an essential move towards equality and empowerment.

Famous Stutterers shown here (from left to right; bottom to top):
Bruce Willis, James Earl Jones, Claudius, Joe Biden, Emily Blunt, Lee Reeves, Marilyn Monroe, Lewis Carroll, Moses, Noel Ahedo, R.N., Winston Churchill, King George VI, Walt Manning, CCC SLP, Alan Rabinowitz, Sergeant Craig Curry, John Stossel

Pictures removed due to copyright issues
Works Cited


Works Cited


- Hughs, Stephanie; Gabel, Rodney; Irani, Farzan; Schlagheck, Adam. “University students’ perceptions of the life effects of stuttering” *Journal of Communication Disorders* vol. 43, issue 1. January/February 2010: pages 45-60.


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