

# Receiving negative feedback does not impair future performance



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## Background

- Performance feedback can be a source of stress for employees.
- Even though feedback is used in order to improve subsequent performance, it actually decreases it in about one third of cases.<sup>2</sup>
- Negative feedback in particular is likely to impair work performance.<sup>2,3,4,5</sup>
- Receiving negative feedback can be the source of rumination, leaving less attentional resources available to complete tasks, which leads in turn to lower performance.<sup>2</sup>

## Research Question

How does negative performance feedback impact subsequent performance on different cognitive tasks?

## Hypothesis

- H: Negative feedback will impair subsequent performance

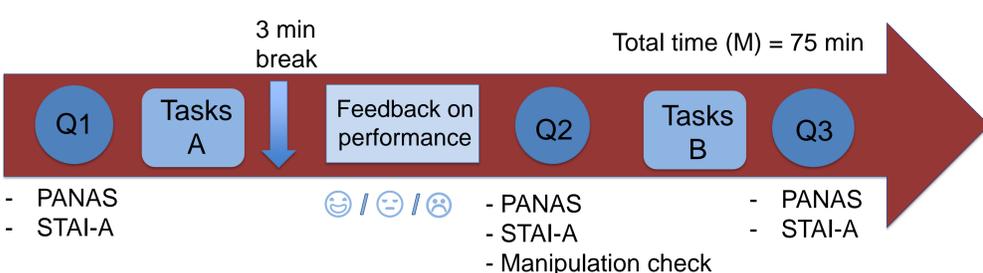
## Methods

### Sample:

N = 60 students from Fribourg University, from all departments except from psychology-related departments. 23 females, 37 males. Mean age = 24.1 years, SD = 5.3

### Procedure:

- Participants completed a first set of tasks (A).
- They received positive, negative or no feedback (control group) on their performance.
- They then completed the second set of tasks (B).
- Negative and positive affect (PANAS) as well as anxiety level (STAI-A) were measured at 3 different times.

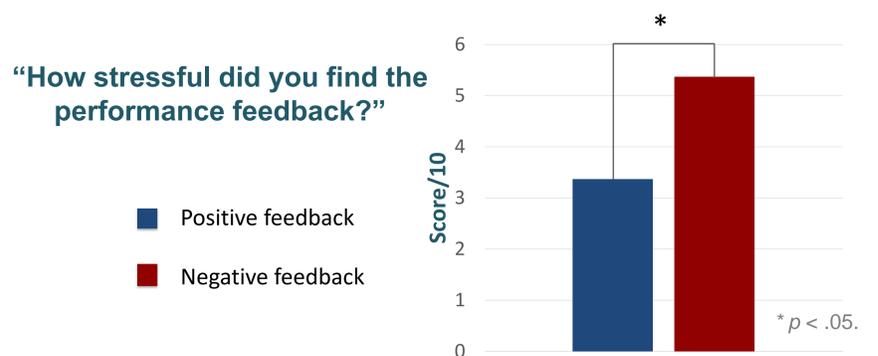


Tasks A General knowledge; Number memory; Mental Arithmetics

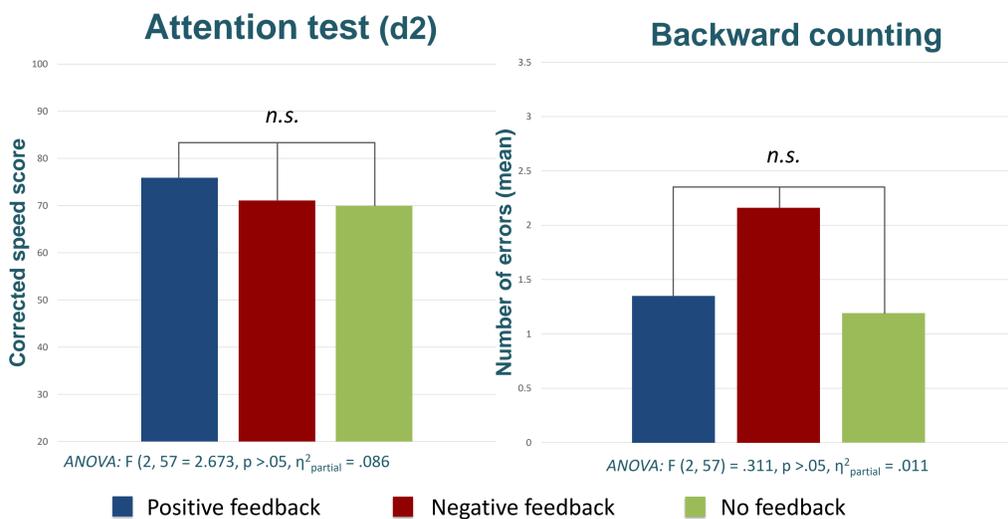
Tasks B Backward counting / d2 test of attention

## Results

### Manipulation check (10 points Likert scale):



### Performance results



## Conclusion

- Participants reported feeling stressed by negative feedback
- However performance was not affected by negative feedback

### Possible explanation:

- Rationalization (e.g. attribution of performance to external circumstances)
- Incongruence with participants beliefs
- Negative feedback not intense enough
- Insufficient time to enter into a state of rumination

### Future studies:

- Use tasks more closely modelling real work activities
- Use Multiple tasks instead of single tasks environments
- Use simultaneous exposure to stressor with performance measure

## References

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