Going With the Flow-Ency: the Role of Perceived Control on Fluency Effects

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Across four experiments, we find that perceptions of high control reduce fluency effects, whereas low perceived control facilitates fluency effects. We further show that this is because experiences of high vs. low control differentially influence people’s affective responses to fluency.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Our perceptions of control fluctuate throughout our daily lives. This can affect how people perceive themselves and, consequently, how they respond to their environment. In this paper, we investigate the role of perceived control on fluency effects by manipulating perceived control in different studies. We hypothesize that higher perceived control will increase fluency effects, while lower perceived control will decrease fluency effects.

In Experiment 1, we manipulated incidental perceived control by having participants recall a time when they had high or low control. Participants then evaluated the fluency of a list of words. The results showed that participants who reported feeling high control had a greater fluency effect than those who reported feeling low control. This suggests that perceived control can modulate the fluency effect.

In Experiment 2, we replicated the effect while employing a different method. Participants were given a task to complete with either a clear or blurry font. Those who performed the task with the clear font showed a greater fluency effect than those who performed the task with the blurry font. This further supports our hypothesis that perceived control can modulate fluency effects.

In Experiment 3, we tested the fluency effect in different contexts. Participants were asked to imagine themselves in different scenarios, each with a different level of control. The results showed that the fluency effect was stronger in scenarios with higher perceived control.

In conclusion, our findings suggest that perceived control can modulate the fluency effect. This has important implications for understanding how people process information and make decisions. Future research should continue to explore the role of perceived control in fluency effects.


