

P2: Subjective memory loss and cognitive failures: the Validity of self-reports

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- Research Purpose:** This project examines the validity of self-reports of memory and attention skills.
- Research Description:** Many people complain about memory loss and other cognitive failures as they get older, or indeed at younger ages when they become overloaded. The Subjective Memory Questionnaire (SMQ: Bennett-Levy & Powell, 1980) is a self-report instrument developed to assess these skills. It has been noted, however, that scores on this self-report instrument do not correlate with laboratory tests of memory.
- In a similar vein, Broadbent's (1982) Cognitive Failures Questionnaire was designed to measure the cognitive failure facets of attention, memory, and motor function. It is not known whether scores on this test correlate with objective measures of the same underlying constructs.
- The aim of the current project is to examine relations among the constructs measured by these two self-report scales and to check for relations with laboratory measures of memory and attention.
- Participants:** Approximately 150 participants recruited through the Department of Psychology's online survey administration system.
- Methodology:** The following questionnaires will be used in this project:
- (a) The SMQ (Bennett-Levy & Powell, 1980).
 - (b) The CFI (Broadbent et al., 1982).
 - (c) Two measures of attention and two of memory to be constructed for online administration.
- We already have an electronic version of the CFI.
- Data and Analysis:** The analytic techniques will not go beyond those learned in the undergraduate and Honours years and will mostly involve data screening, multiple regression analysis, and factor analysis.
- Student friendliness:** This project is suitable for all Honours students. Data collection will be online. Face-to-face meetings will occur during the compulsory workshops and at times if the opportunity arises. This project is suitable for both on campus and off campus students.
- Expected research outcomes:** Conference proceedings paper, perhaps a journal article.
- Further reading:** Bennett-Levy, J., Powell, G. E. (1980). The Subjective Memory Questionnaire (SMQ). An investigation into the self-reporting of 'real life' memory skills. *British Journal of*

Social and Clinical Psychology, 9, 177-188.

Broadbent, D. E., Cooper, P. F., Fitzgerald, P., & Parkes, K. R. (1982). The cognitive failures questionnaire (CFQ) and its correlates. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 21, 1-16.

Ethics:

- X Ethical approval will be sought by supervisor; or
 - Ethics approved – number: **HP2008:39**
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Resources:

- X Project able to be funded within \$150 departmental limit
 - Project not able to be funded within \$150 departmental limit – additional funds will come from:
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