

Investigating the relationship between sensory processing sensitivity (SPS), anomalous experiences, and precognitive performance

ABSTRACT:

Background

Sensory Processing Sensitivity (SPS) is a temperament trait identified by deeper processing of information, being overwhelmed by stimulation, having greater empathy and emotional reactivity, and being able to sense subtleties in the environment.

Aims

- 1) Investigate the relationship between SPS, transliminality, boundary-thinness, and anomalous experiences (AEs)
- 2) Establish if high SPS is associated with better performance on a dream-precognition task
- 3) Establish if high SPS is associated with greater presentiment effects.

Method

Study 1 used an online survey. Study 2 used a dream diary precognition protocol to investigate if SPS predicted similarity ratings given to a target image. Study 3 used measures of heart rate variability and electrodermal activity to establish whether SPS is associated with presentiment.

Results

There were correlations between each of the three sensitivity predictor variables and the AEI. Transliminality and boundary thinness positively predicted anomalous beliefs with transliminality being the stronger. Only transliminality predicted anomalous experiences and anomalous abilities. Participants rated target images marginally higher than the decoy images. However, there was no clear relationship between target ratings and SPS, transliminality, boundary thinness, or anomalous belief and experiences. There was no evidence of presentiment effect, or an effect of SPS, however, heart rate variability did seem to play a role with regard to presentiment.

Conclusions

Transliminality plays a mediating role between SPS and anomalous experiences, belief, and abilities. When using a home-dream paradigm participants were able to precognitively dream about a future target image, but this was not influenced by sensitivity. Furthermore, SPS could not predict any presentiment effect, but the role of HRV in presentiment should be explored further.

Keywords

Anomalous experiences, Boundary-thinness, Highly sensitive person, Sensory processing sensitivity, Transliminality

Published Work:

Roxburgh, E. C., Vernon, D., & Schofield, M. B. (2024). Sensory processing sensitivity, transliminality, and boundary-thinness as predictors of anomalous experiences, beliefs, and abilities. *Current Psychology*, 43(38), 30098–30106.

Vernon, D., Roxburgh, E. C., & Schofield, M. (2024). Testing home dream precognition and exploring links to psychological factors. *International Journal of Dream Research*, 17(2), 148–156.

Researchers' Contacts:

Dr Elizabeth C. Roxburgh
Psychology and Life Sciences
Canterbury Christ Church University
North Holmes Road
Canterbury
CT1 1QU
United Kingdom
Email: elizabeth.roxburgh@canterbury.ac.uk

Dr Malcolm B. Schofield
School of Psychology
University of Derby
Kedleston Road
Derby
DE22 1GB
United Kingdom
Email: m.schofield@derby.ac.uk