

Social Integration and Memory: Investigating Moral Judgement Formation



Introduction

- The ability to form and update character judgments about others is important for successful social functioning.¹
- Relies on **Relational Memory**, a process which binds and organizes relational information for later retrieval.²
- Evidence that emotional/morality information may be separable from explicitly remembered information.¹²
- Regions critical for both memory and emotional integration are known to change in healthy aging.³
- Unclear how people integrate explicit vs. emotional information across time or how these types of memory interact.

Objective

This study aims to contrast objective source memory with subjective moral judgements in healthy adults when exposed to congruent or conflicting social information to better understand how relational memory guides our opinions of others.

Key Questions

1. How do healthy adults update their moral judgments when presented with congruent vs. conflicting social information?
2. Is morality memory associated with remembering the specific details or just how you feel about the person?
3. Does aging impact subjective and objective memory of moral info?

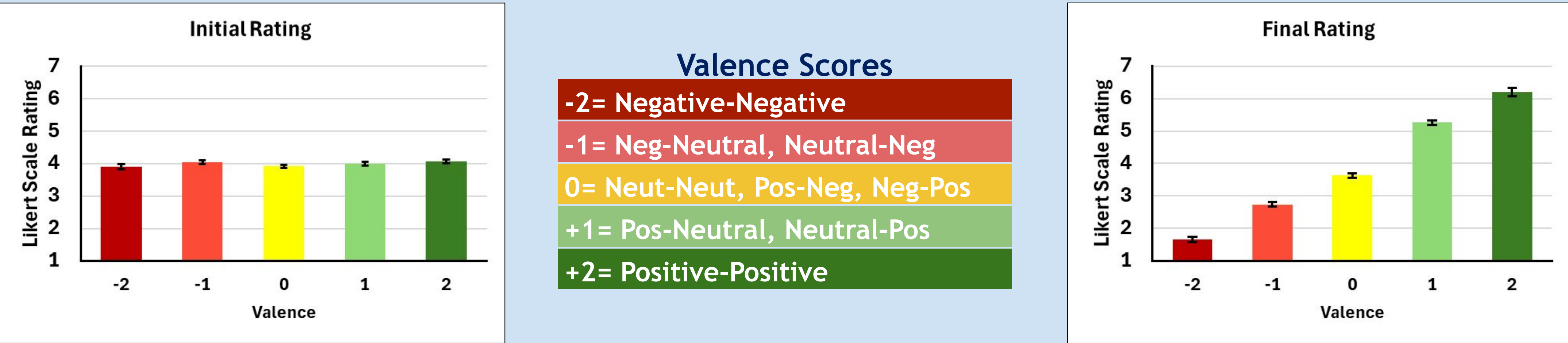
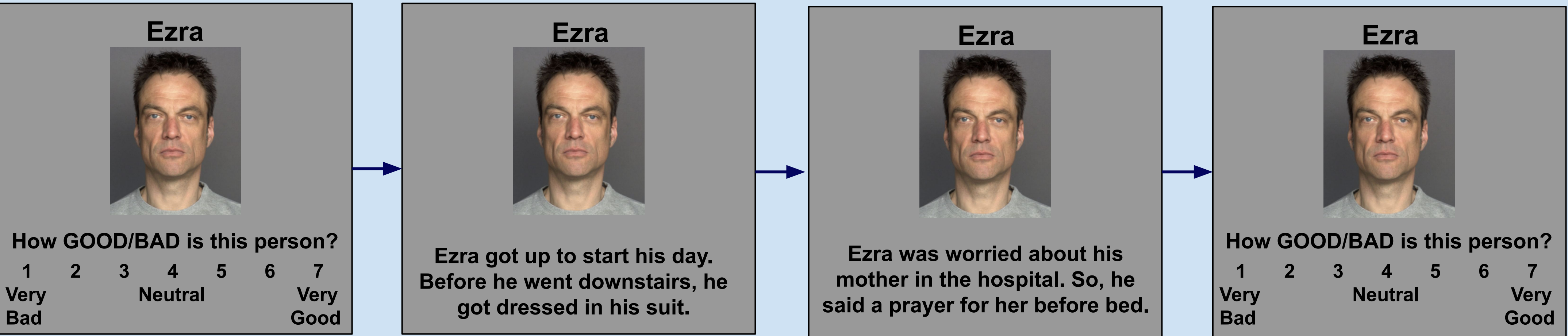
Paradigm

Social Rating	Norming	Memory Test
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Participants

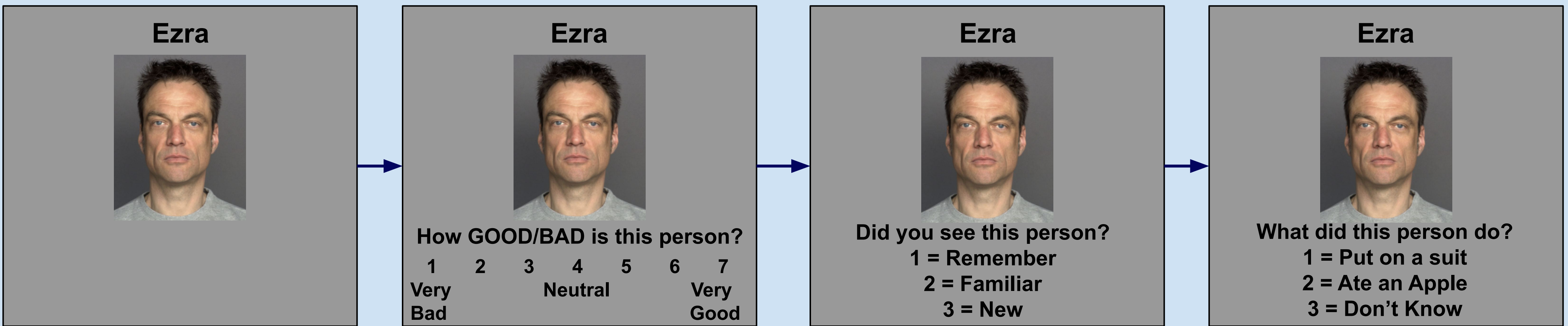
- 30 young adult participants
- Ages 18-22 (18 Female, 12 Male)
 - Recruited from community solicitation and SONA systems

Social Integration



- All faces were rating similarly at initial study, around a rating of 4 (neutral).
- Ratings after two scenarios showed integration of both pieces of information, with all conditions being significantly different from each other (p 's < 0.001).

Memory Test



- a) Morality ratings were weaker at test, but showed a similar pattern to previous ratings.
- b) Recognition of studied faces showed a negativity bias, but no effect of congruency.
- c) Memory for actions was generally best for the most positive faces, but was overall poor.

Discussion

- Healthy young adults do successfully integrate two pieces of social information, even if incongruent.
- While some preservation of morality ratings exist, final ratings were much weaker than initial ratings, suggesting that participants do not strongly preserve moral judgements after a delay.
- There was an interaction between item and morality memory, with **negative** faces being most well remembered and **positive** faces being least well remembered.
- Evidence for a negativity bias in young adults; may be flipped with age.
- Effect did not extend to action memory, suggesting emotion's effect on item vs. relational memory is not the same.

Future Work

- Examine first vs. last learned scenario effects on ratings and memory.
- Collect data with older adults, to assess moral vs. explicit memory integration effects across the lifespan.
- We know young adults integrate both pieces of moral information, do older adults show a similar pattern?
- Assess relational deficits in aging:
 - Older adults fail to remember explicit information, but may maintain emotion.
- Will older adults exhibit a positivity effect in item memory?

References

1. Coronel, Duff, Warren, Federmeier, Gonsalves, Tranel, & Cohen. (2012). Remembering and voting: theory and evidence from amnesic patients. *American Journal of Political Science*.
2. Croft, Duff, Kovach, Anderson, Adolphs, & Tranel, D. (2010). Detestable or marvelous? Neuroanatomical correlates of character judgments. *Neuropsychologia*.
3. Symeonidou, Hassan, Porstein, & Kuhlmann. (2023). Is there an emotionality effect in older adults' source memory?. *Neuropsychology, development, and cognition*.