

Greater Performance Improvements When Quick Responses Are Rewarded More Than Accuracy Itself

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ScienceBlogs:

Last month's *Frontiers in Psychology* contains a fascinating study by Dambacher, Hübner, and Schlösser in which the authors demonstrate that the promise of financial reward can actually reduce performance when rewards are given for high accuracy. Counterintuitively, performance (characterized as accuracy per unit time) is actually better increased by financial rewards for response speed in particular.

The authors demonstrated this surprising result using a flanker task. In Dambacher et al's "parity" version of the flanker, subjects had to determine whether the middle character in strings like "149" or "\$6#" were even or odd. "149" is an incongruent stimulus; for trials of that type, the correct answer is typically produced more slowly than, say, cases like "\$6#" (a neutral stimulus) – where there is no conflict arising from the characters that "flank" the middle character. Three critical manipulations were made to this relatively well-understood task.

Read the whole story: [ScienceBlogs](#)