

Background

- Adults generally have a positive view of themselves, which leads them to remember their past actions in a positive way (Kouchaki & Gino, 2016). In the present research, we asked whether children's memory is also biased in a self-enhancing way.
- This is particularly important because if children primarily remember times when they were nice, rather than times when they transgressed, this may help to reinforce views of themselves as "good" and lead to continued prosocial behavior (Tasimi & Young, 2016).
- We also examined individual-level factors that may be associated with self-enhancement bias:
 - Parent reminiscing goals:** Western parents tend to highlight their children's past positive actions and minimize negative ones during joint reminiscence (Miller et al., 2012), which could contribute to a stronger bias.
 - Self-esteem:** Adults with high self-esteem tend to show stronger self-enhancement bias (Falk & Heine, 2015). This may also be related to bias in childhood.
 - Self-values:** Children with high self-enhancement values (power and achievement) or low self-transcendence values (benevolence and universalism) may show a stronger bias.

Participants

Thirty-two 8- to 10-year-olds ($M = 9;8$, $Range = 8;4 - 11;0$)

Parent Measure

One parent of each child completed the Caregiver-Child Reminiscence Scale (Kulkofsky & Koh, 2009) where they rated how frequently they talk about the past to serve different kinds of goals.

Acknowledgments

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Procedure

1) Encoding Phase

Children saw four different types of trials intermixed in a random order:

	Nice verb	Mean verb
Self-reference	9 trials  Do you do this? Hug someone Yes No	9 trials  Do you do this? Cheat on a test Yes No
Other-reference	9 trials  Does Fred do this? Give a present Yes No	9 trials  Does Fred do this? Hit someone Yes No

2) Filler Task

Made a list of fruits and vegetables for 2.5 minutes

3) Test Phase

Children saw all verbs from the Encoding Phase along with 9 new Nice verbs and 9 new Mean verbs. Children picked which type of item they thought each verb was:

Hug someone		
New	Me	Fred
(Not seen before)	(Old & Self-reference)	(Old & Other-reference)

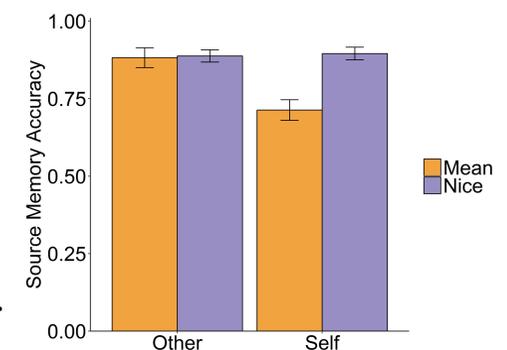
4) Self-Values and Self-Esteem

Children completed the Picture Based Values Survey (Döring et al., 2010) and the Self-Perception Profile for Children (Harter, 2012).

Results

Self-enhancement bias

Children's source memory was biased: They remembered self-referenced mean verbs worse than self-referenced nice verbs and other-referenced mean verbs.



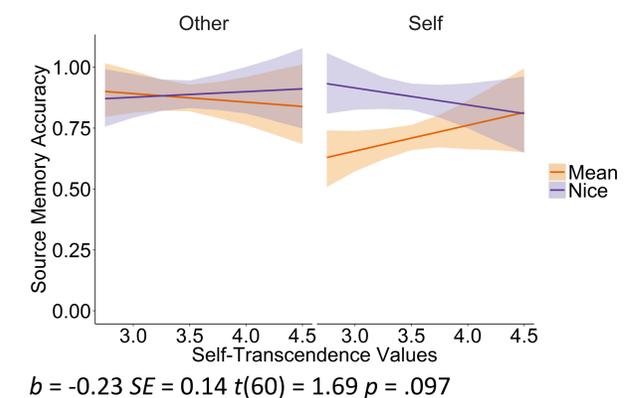
Parent reminiscing goals

We used centered scores to represent the extent that parents saw each goal as more important than other goals. None of the goals moderated the self-enhancement bias.

Self-esteem

Self-esteem did not moderate the self-enhancement bias. This is surprising given previous findings with adults. However, overall children's self-esteem was high and there may not have been enough variability to find an effect.

Self-values



Children who rated values such as, "help others" more highly showed less bias: Their memory for self-referenced mean items was similar to their memory for self-referenced nice items. Thus, children's self-values may be related to the way they remember their own past behaviors.

References

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