

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

[G-0-2025] – The effects of advice context on simple decisions

WHO IS CONDUCTING THIS RESEARCH?

My name is Dylan Aloisio Shearer (dylan.aloisioshearer@studnet.uts.edu.au), and I am student at UTS. My supervisor is Dr Matthew Davidson (matthew.davidson@uts.edu.au).

WHAT IS THE RESEARCH ABOUT?

The purpose of this research is to investigate how simple decisions are affected by advice context. Previous research has shown that the presence and delivery method of advice can impact on our decision making, and we hope to gain further insight into this area of research. In this experiment you will be asked to make simple visual decisions (like which side of the screen has more dots) as quickly and accurately as possible and be offered advice on this task from a digital assistant.

WHY HAVE I BEEN INVITED?

You have been invited to participate in this study because you are an adult with sufficient computer ability and language skills to complete the experiment.

Before you decide to participate in this research study, please check the selection criteria. We ask that if you are currently taking psychoactive medication for a diagnosed mental health condition that you do not participate.

WHAT DOES MY PARTICIPATION INVOLVE?

If you decide to participate, we will invite you to participate in an online experiment. Participation is expected to take approximately 30-45 minutes, and you will receive 1 SONA credit for your participation. Participation involves completing brief questionnaires, and a series of trials on a simple visual discrimination task.

Questionnaires include basic demographic information, and the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale - 10 items (DASS-10). This will take approximately 5 minutes to complete. This questionnaire is not a diagnostic test of mental illness, it is a monitoring tool for levels of depression, anxiety, and stress. The data collected will be non-identifiable and used solely for statistical analysis. The visual discrimination task will ask you to identify which of two boxes briefly displayed on the left and right of screen contains more dots. After each trial you may be given the opportunity to receive advice and asked to rate your confidence in your decision on a sliding scale.

A detailed debriefing will follow the experiment. The study will be conducted entirely online, and we ask that you complete your experiment using a computer in a calm and quiet environment free from Distractions. No audio, video, or photographic recordings will be made during this study.

All your responses will be anonymized and securely stored. Participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time without penalty. If you have any questions or require assistance during the study, you can contact the research team using the information provided.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS/INCONVENIENCE?

Yes, there are minor risks of discomfort and/or inconvenience in these studies. These include;

- Emotional discomfort – The DASS-10 questionnaire includes questions about stress, anxiety, and depression that may prompt you to reflect on your emotional well-being, which could lead to mild emotional discomfort. This questionnaire will not be used as a diagnostic test of mental illness.
- Fatigue and Eye strain – you may experience mild fatigue or eye strain while completing the experimental tasks due to the need to focus on visual stimuli. This is expected to be minimal, yet if necessary, please take a quick break from staring at the screen and look at something far away to relax.

Please be aware that you have the right to refuse to answer any questions, and you are free to discontinue participation at any point in the research without giving any reason and without any consequences.

If you experience any feelings of distress or discomfort for any reason, please contact your General Practitioner to seek advice. UTS students also have access to the confidential UTS Counselling service 9514 1177.

If you are experiencing an emergency or mental health crisis, the following 24-hour helplines are available for support within Australia:

1. Lifeline: 13 11 14
2. NSW Mental Health Line: 1800 011 511
3. In an emergency call 000

If you are outside of Australia, you should contact your local mental health crisis service, www.befrienders.org, or if available, your primary care practitioner.

DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT?

Participation in this study is voluntary. It is completely up to you whether you decide to take part. If you decide not to participate, or to withdraw from the study, it will not affect your relationship with the researchers or the University of Technology Sydney. If you are a UTS student participation or non-participation will have no bearing on student course progression or assessment.

WHAT IF I WITHDRAW FROM THIS RESEARCH PROJECT?

If you wish to withdraw from the study once it has started, you can do so at any time by closing the browser window. If you close the browser before completing the study your data will not be included in the analyses. However, if you still wish to receive SONA credit you will need to email dylan.aloisioshearer@student.uts.edu.au or matthew.davidson@uts.edu.au to receive this manually. Please note that once you have completed the study it will not be possible to remove any information you have provided because all information is non-identifiable.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO INFORMATION ABOUT ME?

Providing your consent enables the research team to collect and use the information you enter during these experiments for research. We will not collect or store any identifiable information such as your name, email address or student ID for the purposes of this project, meaning that the information you give us is non-identifiable. All the information we do collect will be treated confidentially and stored securely.

Researchers at UTS are required to adhere to policies around data management as set out in the UTS records management policy. You can access this policy here: <https://www.uts.edu.au/about/uts-governance/policies/uts-policy/records-management-policy>.

It is anticipated that the results of this research project will be published and/or presented in a variety of forums, including student presentation and theses. In any publication and/or presentation, aggregated group level information will be provided in such a way that you cannot personally be identified.

WHAT IF I HAVE ANY QUERIES OR CONCERNS?

If you have queries or concerns about the research that you think I or my supervisor can help you with, please feel free to contact us via email at Dylan.aloisioshearer@student.uts.edu.au or matthew.davidson@uts.edu.au

NOTE:

This study has been approved by an ethics review panel in line with the University of Technology Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee [UTS HREC] guidelines. If you have any concerns or complaints about any aspect of the conduct of this research that you wish to raise independently of the research team, please contact the Ethics Secretariat on ph.: +61 2 9514 2478 or email: Research.Ethics@uts.edu.au], and quote the UTS HREC reference number. Any matter raised will be treated confidentially, investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.

CONSENT FORM [online]

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Online Consent: Please tick each box and then click the button below to indicate your consent.

- ☐ I agree to participate in the research project being conducted by Dylan Aloisio Shearer (dylan.aloisioshearer@student.uts.edu.au), who is a student at UTS (15 Broadway Ultimo, NSW 2007). I understand his supervisor is Dr Matthew Davidson (matthew.davidson@uts.edu.au).
- ☐ I have read the Participant Information Sheet or someone has read it to me in language that I understand.
- ☐ I understand the purposes, procedures and risks of the research as described in the Participant Information Sheet.
- ☐ I understand that I will be asked to complete the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale – 10 (DASS-10), and that this questionnaire will not be used as a diagnostic test of mental illness.
- ☐ I freely agree to participate in this research project as described and understand that I am free to withdraw at any time without affecting my relationship with the researchers or the University of Technology Sydney.
- ☐ I understand that my data will be securely stored in non-identifiable format.
- ☐ I understand that I should download a copy of this information and consent form [here]
- ☐ I am aware that I can contact the researchers on the contact details provided if I have any concerns about the research.