

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

[G-0-2025-1-8] – The effects of scene context on simple decisions

WHO IS CONDUCTING THIS RESEARCH?

My name is James Donohoe (james.b.donohoe@student.uts.edu.au) and I am a 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 scene context influences simple decisions. Previous research has shown that natural images can impact our ability to respond quickly and accurately to visual stimuli, and we hope to gain further insight into this area of research. In this experiment you will be given simple cognitive tasks (like searching for geometric shapes and recalling numbers) to complete both before and after exposure to different images.

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 take part 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 answering brief demographic questions and completing simple cognitive tasks.

The first cognitive task is a visual search task, where you will be asked to identify a specific shape amongst other shapes. The second cognitive task is a digit span backwards task, where you will be asked to recall a number sequence in the reverse order. Further detailed instructions on how to do these tasks will be provided during the experiment. You will also be viewing different image scenes and will be asked about your thoughts and impressions of the images after completing the cognitive tasks. The image scenes will contain various depictions of nature.

A detailed debriefing will follow the experiment. This study will be conducted entirely online, and we request 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:

- 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 or not 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 james.b.donohoe@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 this experiment 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 james.b.donohoe@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 James Donohoe (james.b.donohoe@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 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.