Debriefing Form

Thank you for participating in this **cognitive** psychology experiment investigating individual differences in memory recall. People not only differ in *what* they remember but also *how* they approach remembering something. This study aims to identify **trait-like differences, or consistent tendencies, in how people recall their memories**, **and how these memory traits might be associated with different memory performance outcomes at different time points.**

Prior research findings on individual differences in memory recall suggest that people have different remembering styles in how they access and experience their **episodic memories (long-term memories for complex events)**. Some people tend to have vivid representations of a remembered event that include high-resolution perceptual details about the people, objects, and locations that were involved. While some people's memories might be less perceptually rich, and tend to focus on the general structures, underlying concepts, and semantic knowledge relevant to the remembered event.

Currently, it is unclear how people's differences in memory traits (perceptually vs conceptually based memory) relate to the quality and quantity of memories they are able to remember after short and long periods of time. *Do people whose memories tend to be perceptual vs conceptual based necessarily remember more accurate details in the long run?* Our study investigated this in the following ways:

In this study, we measured individual differences in participants' memory traits through a set of five **self-report questionnaires** that included a wide range of questions assessing participants' abilities, habits, preferences, and use of strategies related to memory recall and mental imagery. Participants' scores on the questionnaires serve as our **independent variable.**

We also conducted a memory task where participants watched a series of **short video clips** with complex narrative scenes. We used video clips because we think that memory for video clips might be similar to memory for everyday life events. After watching the video clips, participants were asked to complete two memory tests, one after a **short (30-minute) delay** and one after a **long (2 week) delay**. The memory tests included questions about the plots, characters, and settings in the videos. The number of correct and false memory details on the two memory tests serves as our **dependent variable.**

We will later correlate the self-reported questionnaire scores with the objective memory performance scores to elucidate the nature of the relationship between differences in memory traits and memory performance outcomes. **We hypothesize** that people who have a more perceptually-based remembering approach will remember more vivid perceptual details at a short delay compared to people who are more conceptually based. But we additionally predict that at the long delay, after experiencing natural forgetting processes that mostly impact memory for details, there will be less of a difference in memory performance between perceptually vs. conceptually based memory people.

Questions, Concerns & Final Report:

If any of this is unclear, if you have any questions or concerns not answered here, or if you would like to receive a report of the study findings when it is complete, please feel free to contact the lead researcher, Catalina Yang at catalina.yang@mail.utoronto.ca.

References

Sheldon, S., Farb, N., Palombo, D. J., & Levine, B. (2016). Intrinsic medial temporal lobe connectivity relates to individual differences in episodic autobiographical remembering. *Cortex*, *74*, 206–216. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cortex.2015.11.005

Palombo, D. J., Sheldon, S., & Levine, B. (2018). Individual Differences in Autobiographical Memory. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, *22*(7), 583–597. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2018.04.007

** More information about this area of research – memory – can be found in your psychology textbook: *Discovering Psychology: The Science of Mind* in **Chapter 9: The Knowing Mind: Memory**.