Uncertain World Project

Thank you for your interest in taking part in the University of Reading's "Uncertain World" Project. This project focuses on how children and adults respond to the unknown and is being led by Zoe Ryan as part of her PhD research under the supervision of Dr Jayne Morriss. This task was originally designed for adults, however we adapted it so that it was suitable for children. We then ran the study with 132 children and found surprising results. We therefore now want to see what happens when adults complete the task using the child version.

After this initial information and FAQs, there is a short questionnaire for you to complete.

Project Information

We are looking for 150 **adults** to take part in this project about how people respond to the unknown. We aim to discover why people explore things that are unknown or uncertain; because of curiosity or because they are uncomfortable with not knowing.

In total the project will take approximately **20 minutes of your time**. We will ask you to complete some **short questionnaires**, which should take about 5-10 minutes and then you will **play a game** on a computer at home. To play the game you will need to have access to a **computer that can play sounds, has a webcam, and access to Google Chrome**.

As you have signed up on SONA, you have accessed this information sheet and questionnaires via the link provided and will continue to the game at the end of the questionnaires. The game was originally designed for children and should only take about 10 minutes. It will involve you pressing buttons that make sounds while **your face is being recorded by your computer's webcam**. Due to the nature of the game, you will need to have normal or corrected hearing and vision.

On the next few pages, we answer some frequently asked questions about the project. Please get in touch if you have any other questions or would like to discuss any aspect of the project. If you are happy to take part in the research, please continue through to provide your consent and complete the questionnaires.

This application has been reviewed by the School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct.

Thank you for your time and interest in our project!

Zoe Ryan
(University of Reading Doctoral Researcher)
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What's the point of the project?

We seek out information in our daily lives, and this can be driven by a range of factors. We can be curious, and our thirst for information can lead us to try to find out more. We can also be driven to seek information because we don't like uncertainty and want to decrease it. At the moment we know very little about what drives people's reactions to uncertainty so that is what we are investigating in this project.

The information from the project could be helpful in thinking about how to treat anxiety around uncertainty and for understanding how to stimulate curiosity in education.

We are interested in what drives the behaviour of the whole group and will only be looking at overall patterns for the group, not individuals in detail.

What exactly will happen when I take part?

Once you have finished reading this information sheet, we will ask for you to complete some questionnaires which should take 5 – 10 minutes. Once you have completed the questionnaires, you will start the game.

You will be asked to allow the web browser to start recording on the webcam and then check that the sound is working and at an appropriate level on the computer. You will be shown a brief instruction video which explains what you have to do. You will then be shown a number of buttons on the screen which are linked to different sounds. Each button shows an image relating to the sound, or a "?". Your reaction to the buttons will be video recorded via the webcam in anticipation of the game and during the game. You will be asked to rate how you feel, and then will be given the opportunity to press as many or as few buttons as you like. Each round lasts around a minute. You will be given the opportunity to play the game with different sounds several times.

After you complete the game, you will be asked if you are happy to upload the video to our secure servers by pressing a button – you will be able to choose who is allowed to view the videos at this point. You will then be provided with some further information about the project.

You will be given 0.5 SONA credits for taking part in the research.

What will happen to the information about me?

We are committed to keeping your information safe. All the information we collect and that you share with us will be kept confidential, unless something we observe makes us concerned for your safety, or someone else's safety. We may then need to share information to protect you/someone else. We will use a unique code known only to the project team to identify any information relating to you. That way, all of the information is anonymous. Electronic data including any videos will be stored on secure servers and password protected. Only the researchers working on this project will have access to these stored files. De-identified electronic data for the whole group will be deposited to the University of Reading data archive; no videos, personal or identifiable information will be included.

What if I get upset or don't want to do some of the games?

We of course hope that the game is not upsetting and that you enjoy taking part. We have designed the game so that it is suitable for children and adults. However, if you get upset, decide you don't want to take part, or if you don't feel comfortable at any stage, please stop the game. Taking part is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the research at any point. Withdrawing won't affect the allocation of SONA credits to you.

Who is doing the research?

The project is managed by Zoe Ryan, Doctoral Researcher, under the supervision of Dr Jayne Morriss, Prof. Helen Dodd and Dr Lily Fitzgibbon from the University of Reading and the University of Exeter. All researchers working on the project have enhanced DBS checks.

If you have read this information and are happy to take part in the project, please feel free to continue on to the consent form and questionnaires.

If you have any questions you can contact Zoe on:
z.j.ryan@pgr.reading.ac.uk

or Jayne on:

j.e.morriss@reading.ac.uk

Many thanks for your time and interest in our project!

Zoe