

Study Information for “Social Credit System simulation”

Background

The Social Credit System is a system that is invented by the Chinese Communist Party to encourage trustworthiness. The Social Credit System uses its social score as a reward and penalty mechanism. People are rewarded or punished based on their scores, and people's scores can increase or decrease based on their individual behaviour.

Some rewards are free health checks, cheaper public transport, discounts on energy bills and priority for school admissions/employment. Types of punishments are exclusion from public transport, less access to credit/loans, public shaming and restricted access to public services.

The Social Credit System experiment

During the study you will participate in a simulated Social Credit System experiment. Every day for a week, you will get a few tasks. To complete these tasks, you either have to take a picture (sometimes with time stamp) or give a text-based answer.

Score group

When you complete the tasks in time, the points you could gain for the task will be added, but if the due date (1 day) is expired, then these points will be deducted. After each task you have to complete a questionnaire about your task experience. If you do not complete this questionnaire, your points will not be granted. Please do complete those questionnaires. The Social Credit Score will be between 0-10.000 with three categories: Low (0-4000), Middle (4000-8000), High (8000-10.000). If at the end of the week, your score is 'Low', then you have to bake something for me. However, if at the end of the week, your score is 'High', then I will reward you with a chocolate bar. If you scored 'Middle', then you did not perform good or bad, and you will receive no punishment or reward.

No-Score group

This group has no Social Credit Score. This group gets the same tasks and the same start and due dates. After each task you have to complete a questionnaire about your task experience. Please do complete those questionnaires. Because this group has no score, all participants will be rewarded with a chocolate bar.

You will randomly get assigned to one of the groups after you give consent.

The web-app

The web-app is available on your phone/computer/tablet browser! It may be easier to use your phone to take pictures for the tasks, but you can choose whichever device you like.

You can sign up with your own username and password. After that you will be directed to a questionnaire, after which you will be redirected to your personal Social Credit page. On this page you will find the tasks and questionnaires you have to fill in. On the navigation bar you can see “Study information”, which contains all the information that is in this document, so you can reread it. If you are in the Score group, then you can also go to “Score info” which contains information about what the different score groups mean for you (especially after the experiment) and how your current score is calculated.

Technical problems/questions

If you experience any technical problems or questions on how to use the system, please contact me (see contact details of the researcher). However, if your picture is not accepted, when you think it should have been, please try to send it in again (different background, position, lightening, etc.). If it does not get accepted, then this is just a limitation of the system, as it won't be possible to intervene and thus help you out with this. For the text-based questions, you can expect them to be carefully checked and any fault will be due to some mistake you made.

After experiment

After the experiment I will conduct small a LimeSurvey with questions about how you experienced the whole experiment. This survey will be e-mailed to you together with the information about your reward/punishment.

Purpose of the research

The purpose of this research is getting insight in some behavioural aspects of humans interacting with the Social Credit System. For the exact details about this, you can get an explanation after the experiment ended for all participants (but you have to email me about this!).

Benefits and risks of participating

All my research and research methods have negligible to minimal risks. I hope that the results will contribute to scientific knowledge about human behaviour interacting with the Social Credit System. In case you want to withdraw from the experiment, contact the experimenter and your personal identifiable data will immediately be deleted (name, email, gender and nationality).

Use and preservation of your data

The answers on the tasks and the answers on the questionnaires, which are linked to your profile (name, gender, age, nationality, email), will be stored in the database. The data from the LimeSurvey will be stored on the Radboud servers.

Your research data is stored and archived on my Raspberry PI web server for at most 1 year after the experiment. When this experiment is finalized and a report or article is written on this, the concomitant experimental data are shared or made public, enabling verification, re-use and/or replication of these research results.

Your data will be protected according to the European law (European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)).

Contact details of the researcher

In case of questions or complaints about an experiment or about payment, contact the responsible experimenter first (sharonaniesert@live.nl). You can also contact an independent contact person who is not involved in the study (independent contact person: Miriam Kos, of the Donders Centre for Cognition (dcclabcoordinator@socsci.ru.nl; tel 0243612650).

