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IRPP Assignment

Over the past couple of weeks, I have participated in three research studies on campus. The first was a set of online surveys called BASIC, the second was also a set of online surveys, followed by watching a short video and completing a final online survey called The Reaction to Visual Stimuli, and the third was a Zoom meeting in which I did a couple of tests called The Spatial Stroop Effect Study. I learned a lot from these studies, particularly how much goes into creating a study. I also can connect the studies back to this class because I was able to understand how and why some questions/statements were formatted the way they were.

The first study I participated in was called BASIC. It was a set of online surveys that asked me about a variety of mental health related subjects. For example, there were lots of questions about anxiety, how often I feel anxious, what I do when I feel anxious, etc.. The surveys were set up using Likert scales, so I had to put myself somewhere on the scale based on how I felt about the statements. I think these types of surveys help me learn about myself just as much as they help the researchers learn about their participants.

The second study I participated in was called The Reaction to Visual Stimuli. I had to go to GMS to complete the study, but it was all online. I started by filling out a Likert scale questionnaire about empathy and compassion. Some of the statements were “I often feel what others are feeling.” and “I am able to verbalize my feelings.”. Then in fashion of the Likert scale, I rated myself on a scale of whether or not the statement described me or not. This particular

questionnaire sort of made me feel like a sociopath because I have a very hard time expressing my emotions and often have a level head when others are overly emotional. So, all of my answers made me feel like an emotionless, stoic human.

Regardless of this, after the questionnaire, I watched a three and a half minute long YouTube video. The video was a man talking about how he was very twitchy as a child and always tapping on his desk or his legs. He often got in trouble in school because of this, and he said he remembered feeling super odd and different because of it. This was until one of his teachers gave him a pair of drum sticks and said he was a drummer. The man said that this one act of kindness changed his entire life, and now he is a famous drummer. After watching the video, I filled out another questionnaire asking me more specific questions about the video. Some of the questions were, “Did you feel the emotions of the people in the video were genuine?” and “Did you feel sympathetic towards the man in the video?” I obviously said yes because it was a very sad story that turned into a good one.

The final study I participated in was about the Stroop Effect. The Stroop effect is basically the delay in reaction time that humans experience between incongruent and congruent stimuli. I started off the experiment by reading a list of the names of colors that were written in the matching color. For example, “blue” was written in blue and “green” was written in green. Then I read a list of the words of colors that were written in a different color, and I had to say what color they were written in, and not the word itself. For example, I would see the word “blue”, but it was written in green so I would have to say the word “green”. This was significantly harder than reading the word “blue” that was written in blue.

The second part of the experiment was about the spatial Stroop Effect. There was a + shaped grid, and I had to say what space that an “X” showed up in. The four spaces were top,

bottom, left, and right. Calling out where I saw the X's was pretty easy, but then I had to call out what space different words were popping up in. For example, the word "top" would show up in the left space, and I had to say "left" even though the word was "top". That was pretty difficult. For both parts of the experiment, I was being timed so the researchers could prove that I had an easier time reacting to congruent stimuli (the word "blue" written in blue) vs incongruent stimuli (the word "blue" written in green).

Overall, participating in these studies was super interesting, and I learned a lot. The Stroop Effect is so crazy, and even though I feel like I am particularly bad at reacting to incongruent stimuli, apparently everyone else does, too. I also thought it was super interesting how I felt more empathetic/compassionate than I normally would by simply watching a three minute video. I also thought it was pretty cool that I could identify that I was using a Likert scale or whether I was being asked nominal, ordinal or interval questions.