

Supporting Documentation: Experimenter Gender

Description of task:

We manipulated whether the scientist responsible for the study was male or female. This was done by randomly allocating participants to one of two groups. In group one, participants were told that the study was being run by Dr. Megan Birney. In group two, participants were told that the study was being run by Dr. Matthew Birney

Consent Form:

Dear Participant,

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study.

In this research we are interested in examining the process by which people make **word-group associations**. This is a topic of considerable interest to cognitive neuroscientists interested in neural networking in the brain.

Your task is to look at images describing groups of people and to select a **negative word** that you associate with each group. Your responses will help psychological scientists understand the process of word-group association which is important for understanding the cognitive and neural processes involved when people form impressions.

To begin the study, please press the "Click Here" button at the bottom of this page. You will then be directed towards an image followed by several adjectives. Your task is to choose **one** of these adjectives to describe the group featured in the image.

Thank you very much for your time. Without you, we could not complete our research.

Sincerely,

Dr. Megan Birney/Dr. Matthew Birney

Debrief Form:

Dear Participant,

Thank you again for taking part in this study.

You were told that the aim of the study was to investigate neural networking in the brain by examining the way in which people associate words with images. However, we were more interested in the circumstances under which people follow experimental instructions. In particular, we wanted to know whether perceptions of the prototypicality of the scientist responsible for the study can influence compliance: Are people more likely to persevere in a difficult task for research purposes when they perceive the researcher as a typical example of a scientist?

Previous research suggests that people generally categorise scientists as male instead of female. As such, we used gender to influence perceptions of Dr. Birney as prototypical. Hence, you were either presented with a picture of Dr. Birney as a male (prototypical scientist) or a female (non-prototypical scientist). We then asked you to choose a negative word in order to describe the people portrayed within a set of photographs. While photographs in the first half of the questionnaire were of groups that it may have felt easy to justify describing negatively (i.e. The Klu Klux Klan), in the second half of the questionnaire this may have been more difficult. We were interested in whether the prototypicality of the scientist behind the study would make a difference in your decision to continue. We predicted that those told that Dr. Birney is male would go further in the study than those told that Dr. Birney is female.

If you have any questions about this research or would like to be notified when the study is complete, please contact Megan Birney at meb205@exeter.ac.uk.

Thank you very much.

Megan Birney
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