

Project specification

MEi:CogSci 1st year semestral project

TOPIC OF SPECIALISATION

The project I Know You Think of Me is focused on telepathy and its potential occurrence in communication among people.

PHENOMENON & (PERSONAL) GOALS

According to Myers (1903), telepathy is defined as “the communication of impressions of any kind from one mind to another, independently of the recognized channels of sense.” I am very interested in psi phenomena, and therefore, I would like to dedicate this project to telepathy. In the light of new evidence it seems that telepathy is no longer just a topic of parapsychological enthusiasts and night campers. Studies listed below show that this phenomenon can be real (Beauregard, 2012; Sheldrake, 2003; Storm, Tressoldi & Di Risio, 2010; Venkatasubramanian et al., 2008). On the other hand, telepathic experiments are also strongly criticized and there are many skeptics who do not support existence of telepathy despite numerous abnormally positive results (Hyman, 2010; Rouder, Morey, & Province, 2013). Nevertheless, telepathy still attracts people. Moreover, this psi element is interdisciplinary because it connects various fields of science – psychology, neuroscience, quantum physics, informatics, artificial intelligence, and others. Therefore, I plan to collect more information on this phenomenon and then, through a controlled experiment, I would like to find out whether my participants are able to “telepathically” detect thoughts of others.

References

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- Sheldrake, R. (2003). *The sense of being stared at*. New York: Crown Publishers.
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- Venkatasubramanian, G., Jayakumar, P., Nagendra, H., Nagaraja, D., Deeptha, R., & Gangadhar, B. (2008). Investigating paranormal phenomena: Functional brain imaging of telepathy. *International Journal Of Yoga*, 1(2), 66. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4103/0973-6131.43543>

LEARNING OUTCOMES

I expect to broaden my knowledge in the field of telepathy and neuroscience. Designing and conducting this type of experiment should help me to improve my managerial, scientific, and methodological skills. Moreover, I will have to discuss this issue with many different people and deliver them my requests and pleas so that they will comprehend the content fully. Next, the experiment I am about to conduct should indicate whether my hypothesis, whether people are able to recognize when others think of them, is reasonable. Based on gained results and skills I should be able to evaluate my actions critically, learn from my mistakes, and prevent future ones. Finally, presenting this research at the conference should give me valuable feedback and new inspiration.

PROJECT

Project title: I Know You Think of Me – Experimenting with Telepathy

Short Project Description (300-500 characters)

Telepathy is a controversial topic and even though this phenomenon is not accepted by many people, there are scientists who are persuaded about its existence (Beauregard, 2010; Sheldrake, 2003; Storm, Tressoldi & Di Risio, 2010; Venkatasubramanian et al., 2008). Communication plays a crucial part in human existence and operating, and the way of our communication takes many forms. Therefore, I am curious whether telepathy can be one of the relevant communication forms among people. Studies mentioned above show abnormal positive results in numerous telepathic experiments and so far, no one has provided any scientific explanation that would clarify them. Therefore, it is presumed that people are able to receive some kind of vibrations and thoughts of other people although they are not in a physical contact. This event can be defined as telepathy, and consequently, that is something that I would like to examine.

In the experiment I am conducting, I am using five participants who are divided in two groups. One of those five is a receiver who is located in a separate room and another four participants are senders. These senders are supposed to call to the receiver in a random order that is not, of course, disclosed to the receiver. The receiver should guess who of the four senders is calling. The receiver is not alone in the room. He/she is accompanied by a researcher who checks on the phone of the receiver. Logically, the receiver cannot see who calls and the presence of the researcher should prevent cheating. Finally, the receiver has 25 per cent chance to guess the right person who calls.

The literature suggests that mainly people with psi abilities are scoring rather higher in these experiments. On average, an often referred hit rate is above 30 per cent. Moreover, studies recommend using ganzfeld conditions in telepathy experiments that should deprive receivers of external stimuli. In my experiment, I will not use ganzfeld conditions but relaxation. My participants will fill out forms in which they will be asked several questions. A few of the questions will be focused on their possession of “special” abilities and belief in telepathy. If any of the participants possess any psi abilities, it would be essential to assume that they achieve higher scores in guessing. These outcomes would be in accordance with mentioned studies.

Project Plan

In order to achieve the learning outcomes specified for the project I will take the following measures:

Project steps:

I. Literature research

In this phase, I collect and review relevant articles and other sources connected to the phenomenon of telepathy. These should also give me a general overview of the phenomenon and cues for further research. Essentially, materials should be mostly peer reviewed to ensure that their outcomes are relevant and reasonable. I will not limit this process by a specific time frame since the search for relevant literature is a constant and on-going process. I plan to acquire materials via internet engine searches, online databases, and libraries. I expect to spend about 60 hours on searching and reading potential sources. I also presume that I collect majority of all crucial materials till the end of April, 2016.

II. Formulating hypotheses

H1: Individuals (receivers) will be able to detect who of the four randomly assigned people (senders) calls them.

H0: Individuals (receivers) will not be able to detect who of the four randomly assigned people (senders) calls them.

III. Planning of experiment

Till the end of March 2016, I expect to search, study, and consult collected literature, materials, and design of the project. In the beginning of April 2016, the final design of the experiment will be set. I will start to look for potential participants already in March. I plan to involve around ten participants who are supposed to know other participants personally. During May 2016, I will conduct experiment sessions with participants. Each receiver will go over three sessions. Each session consists of ten trials in which receivers will guess. Eventually, I plan to conduct at least ten sessions with 100 trials. In the end of May, I expect to have all data so that I can perform data analysis and consult results with my supervisors. In the beginning of June, 2016, I will focus on completion and finalization of the poster for the MeiCogSci conference in Vienna that is held on June 23-25, 2016.

IV. Realization of the experiment

The goal of the experiment is to disclose whether a receiver can detect which one of the four senders call him or her in a specific time. The chance to guess correctly is one to four. Though, there will be five participants in a group. One is chosen to be the receiver and leaves a room. Others will become senders and stay in the room. They will be randomly assigned to call to the receiver. Each of the senders has the same chance to be assigned to call in all ten trials. For example, there is a chance that one and the same person would call to the receiver in all ten trials. However, the probability of this event is very small. A researcher (I) will join the receiver in the room to prevent the receiver from cheating by watching his or her phone. Senders will call to the receiver in one minute time periods. When the phone starts to ring, the

receiver has to guess who is calling. The researcher writes down whether the receiver marks the right person. If he/she did not, the researcher would write the said name. After ten trials, the receiver should be changed. I expect recruiting participants in the beginning of April. The experiment will be held during May, 2016. I expect to have all data no later than on May 31, 2016.

V. Data analysis & interpretation of data

I will start to collect data from the experiment in May, 2016. I leave ten extra days for data completion in case of potential session make ups or if any problems or contamination of data occur. Most probably I will use SPSS software to analyze the data.

VI. Documentation of project

First Abstract deadline: May 18, 2016
Review deadline: May 25, 2016
Second Abstract deadline: June 1, 2016
Experiment deadline: May 31, 2016
Data Analysis deadline: June 10, 2016
Project deadline: June 15, 2016
Conference and presentation: June 23 - 25, 2016

Resources needed:

- Around 10 participants (expected cooperation without financial remuneration)
- Financial budget for the conference – traveling costs, accommodation, food

Notes and reminders:

Amendments

1.1. Telepathy Project 2016 - Gant Chart

Phase:	Activity:	March	April	May	June
Phase 1:	Topic Research	█	█	█	█
	Find a supervisor		█		
	Experiment Design		█	█	
	Recruitment of participants		█		
Phase 2:	Start the experiment with participants			█	█
Phase 3:	Abstract				█
	Data completion and analysis				█
	Finishing the poster				█
Phase 4:	Minor Adjustments				█
	Presentation at the Conference				█