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Measuring the psychophysiology of information literacy

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Description Deception is often used to great effect in psychology experiments but not in the study of information literacy. This paper describes an experiment involving deception to test psychophysiological reactions to mis-information. People aged 18-24 are the most likely users of the Internet including social media (ONS, 2017) and therefore more likely to be exposed to mis-information. Booker (2016) found that frequency of use of social media in young people is linked to their level of happiness (well-being). For this reason it was thought appropriate to target this group. Due to the variability in which males and females use ICT (Ford, 2004) we decided to use males only (n= 48). It is not known to what extent mis-information (eg, fake-news) affects the psychophysiological responses of young males aged 18-24 and to what extent information discernment (in other words., the ability to make complex judgments about information (Walton, 2017)) protects against ill-being. This experiment seeks to demonstrate that information discernment level moderates the relationship between mis-information and cardiovascular reactivity in stressful social situation (s). Challenge and threat theory maintains that individuals respond to stressful situations with either an adaptive (challenge) or maladaptive (threat) response (Blascovich & Mendes, 2001). This experiment involved deceiving participants into believing they were helping a fellow student win a prize. In fact they were given a task that was impossible to complete to create mild stress. Participants completed a pre-test questionnaire that measured their information discernment level. Two physiological measures were ...

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