Name(s)

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Project Number

S0318

Project Title

What Do You See? A Two-Year Study of Visual and Audio Subliminal Messages

Abstract

Objectives/Goals

Subliminal messages are not widely understood, but they are used in different forms of the media, including advertising. Audio, and visual subliminal messages are the dominant types. This project compares the two in order to 1) to determine if subliminal messages affect the observer and 2) determine if there is a difference in impact between the two.

Hypothesis-Students exposed to either visual or audio subliminal messages will select the suggested color choice at least 50% of the time. The unexposed control group will select the three colors equally.

Methods/Materials

Students will first watch a 5-minute movie and then take a survey. The survey asks the students to choose a color. Once the data is collected the results will be averaged to determine if subliminal messages are effective. Materials needed include a movie that includes an embedded subliminal message, and surveys for the students.

Results

The students had a measurable response to the visual subliminal message. In the control group students chose yellow 0% of the time. The collected data suggests that visual subliminal messages are successful 32% of the time in the elementary-aged subjects. The results of this experiment show that boys reacted to the visual subliminal message 13% of the time and girls reacted 19% of the time. The audio subliminal message is 7% more success than the visual. The total response rate for all subjects to the audio message was 39%. Boys reacted to the subliminal messages 15% of the time and the girls reacted 24%.

Conclusions/Discussion

The data do not support the hypothesis; the unexposed students did not choose the colors equally. Nor did the students exposed to the subliminal messages choose the suggested color 50% of the time. The project failed to support the hypothesis. The data suggests that there is little or no difference between random selections (33% for each color) and the results of the subliminal messages. (32% and 39%) Statistically there is likely no difference between using subliminal messages or not using the messages.

Summary Statement

This two-year study will compare the effectiveness of visual and audio subliminal messages.

Help Received

Father helped create embedded subliminal messages.