**ARP 2024-5**

**Ethical Action Plan**

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| 1. **What is your project focus?**

The project aims to explore the impact of PowerPoint presentation design on learning effectiveness across a wide range of students and the perception of inclusivity of the slides evaluated directly by the students. The project will specifically focus on the effects of typeface (i.e., curvilinear vs. angular fonts), based on two types of evidence: 1. Critical evaluation of existing empirical research, and 2. Primary data collected in a classroom setting. I would like to clarify that the research project focuses on two types of inclusivity. On the one hand, the project will explore whether there are certain typefaces that appear more friendly and inclusive than others (i.e., students directly evaluate the perception of inclusivity of the slides). On the other hand, the project will explore whether certain typefaces are comprehended by a larger number of students (i.e., students directly evaluate the comprehensibility of the slides). In doing so, the project promotes inclusivity as a positive experience without the classroom as well as maximisation of accessibility to all students within a classroom setting. |
| 1. **What are you going to read about?**

I will be reading the following bodies of literature:* The Curvature Effect: Human psychology is sensitive to the physical properties of objects, such that curvilinear contours (as opposed to angular contours) trigger an emotionally positive response (e.g., Bar and Nesta, 2006).
* Recent evidence further suggests that the positive impact of curvature can be explained via the human approach-avoidance spectrum (e.g., Palumbo, Ruta, & Bertamini, 2015; Tawil, Elias, Ascone, & Kuhn, 2024). In other words, people associate friendliness and general approachability with rounded objects, whereas they associate threat and danger with angular objects. This means that one can expect viewing rounded objects to give a sense of inclusivity and safety, as has been demonstrated also by the fact that people wish to enter curvilinear spaces more than angular spaces (e.g., Vartanian et al., 2019).
* Recently studies have found further evidence of this curvilinearity vs. angularity effect using typefaces (Velasco, Woods, Hyndman, & Spence, 2015). This can lead to the generation of the following research hypothesis: Can the contour of the typeface within lecture slides enhance the sense of visual inclusivity and friendliness in a classroom?
* Research Ethics: This includes UAL documents (e.g., Code of Practice on Research Ethics & Code of Good Conduct in Research). However, this will be supplemented by external resources (e.g., Code of Ethics and Conduct by the British Psychological Society). It is especially important to take notes on the guiding principles of research: respect for persons, justice, and beneficence.
* Research Methods: While a number of texts on research methods and statistical analysis can be consulted, Howitt and Cramer (2020) can be used to assist in designing psychological research and choosing the right statistical analysis. The present study will be a randomised between-participant experiment and t-tests will be used to interpret the statistical significance.
* Font and inclusivity: There is much literature on the relationship between font type, screen readability, and dyslexia (e.g., Rello & Yates, 2016). This literature can be used as a justification and interpretation for how certain design elements of lecture slides can provide wider accessibility across the classroom. Taking this literature, the present study fits nicely into the domain of accessible design.

References:Bar, M., & Neta, M. (2006). Humans prefer curved visual objects. *Psychological Science*, *17*(8), 645-648. Howitt, D., & Cramer, D. (2020). *Research Methods in Psychology* (6th ed.). Pearson.Palumbo, L., Ruta, N., & Bertamini, M. (2015). Comparing angular and curved shapes in terms of implicit associations and approach/avoidance responses. *PloS One*, *10*(10), e0140043.Rello, L., & Baeza-Yates, R. (2016). The effect of font type on screen readability by people with dyslexia. *ACM Transactions on Accessible Computing (TACCESS)*, *8*(4), 1-33.Tawil, N., Elias, J., Ascone, L., & Kühn, S. (2024). The curvature effect: Approach-avoidance tendencies in response to interior design stimuli. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, *93*, 1-12.Vartanian, O., Navarrete, G., Chatterjee, A., Fich, L. B., Leder, H., Modroño, C., ... & Nadal, M. (2019). Preference for curvilinear contour in interior architectural spaces: Evidence from experts and nonexperts. *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, *13*(1), 110-116.Velasco, C., Woods, A. T., Hyndman, S., & Spence, C. (2015). The taste of typeface. *i-Perception*, *6*(4), 2041669515593040. |
| 1. **What action are you going to take in your teaching practice?**

Should the study’s experimental outcomes result in a unanimously positive outcome for font type, there will be efforts made to alter (where possible) the typeface in lecture slides.The practicalities and feasibilities of the actions are straightforward. As soon as the results are out and are convincing, the typefaces of the lecture slides can be altered for future lectures.  |
| 1. **Who will be involved and how?**

Current students (part of the MSc Applied Psychology in Fashion and potentially BSc Fashion Psychology) who are at least 18 years of age will be involved. The study will be carried out using an online study format (Qualtrics). Below is the study’s design in chronological order:* Participant Information Sheet
* Consent Form
* Participants will be asked to read a set of lecture slides (e.g., on the topic of ethics in psychological research) – half of the participants will read the lecture slides written in a rounded font (e.g., Arial Rounded) whereas the other half of the participants will read the same lecture slides written in an angular font (e.g., **Times New Romans**).
* Participants will rate their impressions of the lecture slides, on a scale (e.g., 1 (don’t agree at all) to 7 (completely agree)). Sample questions:
	1. “The general tone of the slides was inviting and friendly”
	2. “The writing in the slides was easy to read”
	3. “I liked the general design of the slides”
	4. “The general tone of the slides felt inclusive”
	5. “The font of the slides was appropriate”
* Participants will take a quiz on the earlier presented lecture slides (around 6 questions). Students should be familiar with completing quizzes as part of the current curriculum (the students should also be familiar with the content of the slides).
* Participants will be asked whether they think they know the intention of this study (i.e., a simple “yes” vs. “no” question, with those who selected the first option to be given the opportunity to explain)
* Participants will be asked the following question: “Please have a look at the slides again. From a scale of 1 to 7, to what degree do you think the shape of the font is curved (as opposed to being angular)?”
* Debriefing

N.B. If any of your participants/co-researchers will be under 18, please seek advice from your tutor. |
| 1. What are the health & safety concerns, and how will you prepare for them?

This proposed research is a minimal risk research according to the UAL and the BPS (<https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/BPS%20Code%20of%20Human%20Research%20Ethics.pdf>) ethics guidelines. Participants will be taking part in the proposed research at a place of their own convenience and there will be no questions that would expose participants to greater risks than those which they are exposed to in their normal lifestyles. However, there can be unprecedented psychological distress, how unlikely that may be. Therefore, prior to consenting, participants will be informed of study details via a participant information sheet. Especially, they will be made aware of the study outline and their rights to withdraw – withdrawing from a study can be done at any time during the study and without giving reasons. They are also made aware that the study will not collect any identifiable and personal data – the researchers will not be able to identify a participant by looking at their responses. The study will start with a participant information sheet and consent form. At the end of the study, participants will be debriefed about the actual intention of the study. |
| 1. **How will you protect the data of those involved?**

Participant data will remain anonymous at all stages of the data collection and data analysis. The survey will be carried out through an online surveying software called Qualtrics, where the complete anonymisation of responses is possible (<https://www.qualtrics.com/support/survey-platform/survey-module/survey-options/survey-protection/#AnonymizingResponses>). In selecting this option, the survey will not collect any personal and identifiable data, e.g., IP addresses, location data. It should also be emphasised that no questions will be asked in the survey where participants’ identity can be inferred (as per point 43 of the BERA Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research: <https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-fifth-edition-2024-online#privacy-data-storage>). The survey will not include the question of age and gender. Last but not least, in case of participants’ misunderstanding with regard to anonymity, all the said points above will be outlined in the participant information sheet and consent form.  |
| 1. **How will you work with your participants in an ethical way?**

As mentioned above, it is important to inform the participant about the study and receive consent prior to data collection. They will be informed of the potential risks involved (even though the study is minimal risk) and how their data will be used. They will also be debriefed at the end of the study to enhance transparency and respect.In terms of the copyright for the use of texts and fonts, the project will make use of publicly available resources (e.g., UAL Code of Good Conduct in Research & British Psychological Society Code of Ethics and Conduct). However, I would like to emphasise that the project is strictly non-commercial research, which would tie all stimulus under Exceptions to Copyright (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/exceptions-to-copyright#overview>). The source of the stimuli will be acknowledged at the end of the study. |