

# ABC University

## Application for Review of Human Subjects Research

### General Information

#### Principal Researcher's Contact Information

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#### Department/School:

Psychology

#### Research Category: (Please mark an X in the appropriate box)

- Faculty Research
- Graduate Student Research
- Senior Thesis
- Undergraduate Independent Study
- Undergraduate student research
- Honors thesis
- Research from another institution
- Other, please specify:

Title: Social Exclusion and Self-Control

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### Background

#### Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of the current study is to investigate the impact social rejection may have on an individual's ability to engage in self-control.

#### Rationale for the Study:

Human beings rely on group life for their health, well-being, comfort, and other positive outcomes. Being

accepted into a social group is therefore an almost indispensable goal of human striving. Obtaining such acceptance is however a long and difficult task that may entail years of learning how to behave in socially acceptable ways, acquiring marketable skills, cultivating good relationships, and building a favorable reputation. To succeed at those endeavors, people must have an effective capacity for altering their behavior so as to conform to externally (socially) defined standards. That capacity is often defined as self-regulation. It is therefore plausible that one of the overarching purposes of self-regulation is to secure acceptance by others.

If self-regulation exists partly for the sake of securing and maintaining social acceptance, then social rejection may affect it. People might respond to social exclusion with either an improvement or an impairment of self-regulation, however, previous empirical findings led us to anticipate impairments in self-control. Multiple studies have shown that being accepted versus rejected by social groups has a wide range of effects on individuals. Health, happiness, and well-being are strongly tied to whether one is accepted or rejected (Cacioppo, Hawkley, & Berntson, 2003; Myers, 1992; Lynch, 1978). Ostracized individuals exhibit a broad range of distress and pathology (Williams, 2002). Rejected people are more likely than others to behave aggressively (Buckley et al., in press; Twenge et al., 2001). They are less likely to act in prosocial ways such as cooperating with someone or providing help (Twenge, Ciarocco, et al., 2003). They exhibit an assortment of cognitive deficits, such as impaired logical reasoning (Baumeister, Twenge, & Nuss, 2002). They show distorted time perception, an emphasis on the present rather than the future, a seemingly lethargic passivity, and an avoidance of self-awareness (Twenge, Catanese, & Baumeister, 2003). They also exhibit self-destructive tendencies, as indicated by various increases in self-defeating behaviors such as foolish risk-taking and unhealthy choices (Twenge et al., 2002).

Self-regulation, defined as the capacity to control or alter one's responses, is a vital mechanism for producing adaptive and socially desirable behavior. If rejection could be shown to impair or undermine self-regulation, then a broad range of socially undesirable behaviors might ensue — consistent with what has already been found regarding the behavior of rejected individuals.

### **Research Question or Hypothesis(es):**

It is predicted that social exclusion will impact the ability to exert self-control. Those that receive the personality feedback telling them they will be alone later in life, will not persist as long on an unsolvable puzzle as long as those that receive other types of feedback ( i.e. acceptance, accident-prone, or no feedback).

## **Research Design:**

The study is a multiple-group design. The independent variable will type of feedback received. Participants will be given one of four types of feedback, including social exclusion, social acceptance, accident-prone, or a no feedback control. Please see the procedure section for further details. The dependent variable will be persistence on an unsolvable

## **Describe in detail the data collection procedure:**

Data collection will be done on an individual basis. Participants will be greeted by the experimenter and given the consent form to read and sign if they choose to participate. The participants will complete the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975). Participants will be given randomly assigned false feedback on the results.

In the high belongingness condition, they will be told, “I’ve seen your type of personality before — you’re the type who has rewarding relationships throughout life. You’re likely to have a long and stable marriage and have friendships that will last into your later years. The odds are that you’ll always have friends and people who care about you.”

In the low belongingness condition, they will be told, “I’ve seen your type of personality before — you’re the type who will end up alone later in life. You may have a lot of friends and relationships now, but by your 40s most of these will have drifted away. You may even marry or have several marriages, but these are likely to be short-lived and not continue into your 40s. Relationships don’t last, and when you’re past the age where people are constantly forming new relationships, the odds are you’ll end up being alone more and more.”

The third condition will be a negative affect control group. These participants will be told, “I’ve seen your type of personality before. You’re likely to be accident-prone later in life — you might break an arm or a leg a few times, or maybe be injured in car accidents. Even if you haven’t been accident-prone before, these things will show up later in life, and the odds are you will have a lot of accidents.” The final condition will be a control condition. These participants will be given no feedback about their personality test.

All participants will be asked to fill out the Brief Mood Introspection Scale (BMIS), a measure of mood. Afterward, participants will be asked to work a several puzzles. The puzzles consist of tracing the entire figure without raising your pencil. Some of these puzzles will be solvable and some will not. The experimenter will make this task seem like an important one, so they will want to do their best on it. Participants will be given

as much time as they like to work on the puzzles. The experimenter will record the number of attempts the participant makes on each puzzle and the overall amount of time the participant spends working on the puzzles. Participants will then be asked to complete a follow-up questionnaire. Afterward participants will be fully debriefed and thanked for their participation. The participants will be orally debriefed at the end of the experiment, before leaving the lab. They will be asked several times throughout the debriefing if they have any questions. They will have a clear understanding of the study design, deception, and reason for deception.

### **Plan for Data Analysis:**

Both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis will be utilized on the data collected. A one-way ANOVA will be used to address the hypothesis.

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## **Sampling Method And Participant Requirements**

### **What sampling method will be utilized?**

Participants will self-select this study from every other psychological experiment being conducted during the semester. All participants will be students within the ABC University community who are part of the psychology subject pool (Sona system) and at least 18 years of age. No one that meets these requirements and signs consent will be excluded from the study.

### **Affiliation of Participants:**

Participants will be ABC University students that are enrolled in the psychology participant pool for the semester.

### **Participant Characteristics - Provide the required narrative:**

Data collection on approximately 60 participants is expected. The participants will be required to be Monmouth University students 18 years of age or older that are included in the psychology department subject pool (available on the online Sona system). The sample will not include any special populations. There are no restrictions on race or gender.

### **What is the population from which you will select participants for the study? Please mark an X in all appropriate box(es)**

- ABC University students
- ABC University Employees

- General Public
- Pregnant Women
- Children
- Institutionalized Persons
- Critically or Terminally Ill
- Non-English Speaking Persons
- Physically Disabled
- Mentally Disabled
- Prisoners
- Economically Disadvantaged
- Educationally Disadvantages
- Elderly
- Other, please specify:

**How will you recruit or select subjects, how will you gain access to them?**

- Flyers/Posters
- Letters
- Email
- Telephone
- Internet
- Radio
- Newspaper
- Other, please specify: Sona system: online participant pool

**Will you advertise for participants or volunteers?**

- Yes  No

**What are the participants expected to do?**

After informed consent is given, participants are expected to fill out a personality questionnaire, listen to feedback on the questionnaire, fill out a measure of mood, work on a puzzle-tracing task, and fill out a follow-up questionnaire. It is also expected that participants will participate in debriefing. The study will happen in a single session and take approximately 30 minutes to complete. Participants may leave or discontinue the study at any time during their participation without penalty of any kind.

**Length of Time Required from participants:**

Data will be collected during a single experimental session which will take approximately 30 minutes.

### **Setting for Data Collection**

Data will be collected in a psychological laboratory in the basement of Main Hall on the ABC University campus.

### **Timeline for the Study**

Expected Start Date: upon date of approval

Expected Completion Date: one year after the approval date

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### **Informed Consent and Assent Procedures:**

Please mark an X in the appropriate box(es):

#### **Will this study seek consent from participants?**

Yes    No

#### **What type of document(s) will be used to obtain consent?**

- Signed Consent Form
- Letter of Consent
- Parental Consent Form
- Child Assent
- Other, please specify:

**Is there any reason why consent will not be sought? Explain why and what procedure you will use to ensure the participant's understanding in order to guarantee their rights.**

Yes    No, please explain: There is no reason that written consent will not be sought.

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### **Instruments, Questionnaires, and Qualitative Data Collection:**

**Which of the following will be used to collect data:**

- Instrument(s)
- Sociodemographic Questionnaire(s)
- Focus Group Discussions
- Interview(s)

- Field notes
- Other, please specify:

**Provide the name of any instrument(s) being used and a citation/reference:**

1. Eyseneck Personality Questionnaire (Eyseneck & Eyseneck, 1975)
2. Brief Mood Introspection Scale (Mayer & Gaschke, 1988)
3. Follow-up Questionnaire designed for this study

**For qualitative studies, what will you be asking participants?**

Not applicable, this research is not qualitative.

**Feedback: What information will be provided to participants concerning their test results?**

Participant will be given false feedback based on the scoring of the personality questionnaire. The deception will be revealed and justified in the debriefing.

**If conducting an experiment, please describe in detail the manipulation being used.**

Participants will be given false-feedback based on their answers to a personality questionnaire to manipulate feelings of belongingness. The feedback will serve as the manipulation (independent variable) in this study. See “Data Collection Procedure” above for more details.

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**Data Collection and Confidentiality:**

**Please indicate if you will use any/all of the following:**

- Audio Recording
- Video Recording
- N/A
- Other, please specify:

**What procedure(s) will you use to ensure confidentiality of the data?**

Strict confidentiality will be maintained. To protect anonymity, numbers will be assigned to participants. All information gathered will be retained, and participants’ names, which will only appear on the consent forms, will be kept separate from the data files. There will be no way to link consent forms to data collected. The data will be

used for statistical analysis, not for individualistic discussion. They will be kept in a locked laboratory, and only researchers will have access to the records.

**Will identification numbers be assigned to each participant and used on data collection forms to protect the participant(s) responses?**

Yes  No

If yes, how will the identification numbers be assigned? The researcher collecting the data will assign identification numbers.

**Who will have access to the list that identifies participants and the assigned identification numbers?**

There will be no record to indicate which participants correspond to the data identification numbers. There will be no way to connect identification numbers with a particular participant as consent forms will not be numbered and will be kept separate from data files.

**Where, how, and how long will the data from the study be stored?**

Data will be kept three years after completion of the research and/or any pending publications are published.

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## **Risks to Research Participants:**

### **Immediate Risks:**

There are no immediate risks anticipated from participating in this research. Rejection is not uncommon in daily life. The goal of this study is to determine if a break down in self-control is a potential result of social exclusion. Therefore, some participants must be given a form of rejection during the study. Some participants will be falsely told that their true personality type is linked to being alone later in life. The belief in this belongingness feedback may cause some participants to feel some mental discomfort. Any mental stress associated with this feedback should be minimal and short in duration. During debriefing it will be made clear to participants that the belongingness feedback was completely fabricated, and that their personality type has no association with their future relationships with others.



**Long-Range Risks:**

There are no long-range risks anticipated from participating in this research.

**If there are immediate or long-term risks to the participant, how will you mitigate these risks?**

There is minimal risk involved in participation. There are no discomforts, inconveniences, or anticipated risks to participants that go beyond those of daily life.

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**Benefits to Research Participants:****Describe any benefits participants may receive as part of volunteering in your study.**

Benefits may include getting a “hands on” look at how psychological research is conducted, and how theory is applied to lab research. Participants may also have the satisfaction of knowing that you have contributed to a better understanding of psychology.

Benefits to the psychological community may include a better understanding of the implications of social rejection. This knowledge is vital to helping those subjected to social exclusion deal with such rejection.

**Will participants be compensated for their time?**

Yes, please explain:

No

The experimental session should last approximately 30 minutes, therefore, participants will earn 1 credit for participation in the study. The credit for participation in the experiment will count toward the research involvement that some psychology students are required to complete. In the unlikely event the study takes longer than anticipated, participants will be compensated accordingly. If the participant arrives for the study and reads the consent form, he or she will be entitled to receive credit for research participation. The participant can refuse to participate in the study at that time without penalty. In addition, the participant may leave or discontinue the study at any time during their participation without penalty of any kind.

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## **Deception**

If no deception will be used, please mark an X and skip to next section [  ]

### **Will you be utilizing deception?**

[ X ] Yes [  ] No

### **What is the nature of the deception involved?**

It is necessary in this study for a minimal amount of deception to be used. First, a cover story must be used to conceal the true nature of the experiment. Second, the participants will be led to believe false feedback based on a personality questionnaire (the false belongingness manipulations). This deception will last as long as the single experimental session will last and will be fully explained to the participant during debriefing.

### **Why is this deception necessary?**

Cover story deception: The goal of this study is to see how people respond to feeling like they do not belong. It is important that we get a natural performance, not one that the participant feels is expected. If participants were to know the true reasoning and hypothesis behind the study they may perform in an unnatural way, by trying to live up to the experimenters' perceived expectations, etc. To eliminate this problem it is necessary for the experimenter to tell the participant a cover story for the experiment. Participants will be led to believe that the experiment is looking at a different area of psychology than it actually is. While the types and numbers of the tasks in the study will be truthful and unchanging (as is appears in the procedure section of the consent form- see consent form), the reasoning for them to participate in each task will be altered.

False belongingness manipulation: Rejection is not uncommon in daily life. The goal of our study is to determine if rejection has depleting effects on people. That is, will it deplete a central source of energy leaving little to none for future activities? Therefore, some participants must be given a form of rejection during the study. Some participants will be falsely told that their true personality type is linked to being alone later in life. The belief in this belongingness feedback may cause some participants to feel some mental stress. Any mental stress associated with this feedback should be minimal and short in duration. During debriefing it will be made clear to participants that the belongingness feedback was completely fabricated, and that their personality type has no association with their future relationships with others.

**If deception is employed, describe the procedure you will use to debrief your subjects.**

Participants will be debriefed orally to each participant before they are released from the study. Please see the debriefing script for more details. All their questions and concerns will be addressed before they leave the laboratory.

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## **Debriefing**

**Will you debrief participants?**

Yes    No

**How will the debriefing take place?**

The participants will be orally debriefed at the end of the experiment, before leaving the lab. They will be asked several times throughout debriefing if they have any questions. They will have a clear understanding of the study design, deception, and reason for deception.

**Debriefing Script:**

*To be read to each participant after their participation has ended.*

First of all, I'd like to apologize for being misleading about what was going on in the study. What we are actually studying is the behavior of people who are made to feel lonely or rejected. I had to give you a cover story for the experiment so that you would act more naturally in the study. If you knew what we were looking at in the study you might have acted differently.

When I told you you would be alone later in life (or would be accident prone,) that was not true. You were randomly assigned to one of four types of feedback. The feedback you received has nothing to do with your personality. It was random. {TELL ABOUT ASSIGNED CONDITION}. Other people were told {TELL ABOUT OTHER CONDITIONS.....}. Do you have any questions at this time?

We are trying to find out if people who are feeling rejected or lonely will be more or less likely to persist or put effort into a difficult task. We led you to believe that the puzzle-solving task was important. What we were looking at is whether you would be willing to keep working on the puzzles. We monitored the amount of time you were willing to work and the number of times you tried a certain puzzle. We predict that

people who are led to believe that they will be alone later in life will not be as likely to persist. Do you have any questions?

I thank you so much for coming a participating in the study. I really appreciate it. Please try not to talk about the study with others. It is very important that everyone act naturally in this study, which may not happen if people know what to expect. If you don't have any questions, then you are all finished. Thanks again.

**ABC University IRB**  
**Informed Consent Form**  
**Social Exclusion and Self-control**

Researcher's Name: Dr. Jane Doe  
Email address: jane.doe@abcuni.edu  
Researcher's Phone number: 123-456-7890

I am engaged in a research study of psychology. The purpose of this research is:

to learn how people perform based on different personality types.

To help gain further insights into this topic, I will ask you:

Participant in consent, fill out a personality questionnaire, work on a puzzle and participate in a debriefing. The entirety of the study, if completed, will last approximately 30 minutes.

The data you provide will be recorded anonymously and your participation and anything you say during the session will be held in the strictest confidence. By University regulations, this informed consent statement will be filed separately from your response, so no one will know that the answers/responses you provide are yours. The study involves no foreseeable risks or harm to you beyond those of everyday life. This study may benefit you by getting a "hands-on" look at how psychological research is conducted, and how theory is applied to lab research. You may also have the satisfaction of knowing that you have contributed to a better understanding of psychology.

You can ask **questions about the research study** or about being a participant at any time, or by calling me at 123-456-7890 or via e-mail at jane.doe@abcuni.edu. In addition, for any research questions, please contact HJK STH the ABC University Institutional Review Board (IRB) by phone at (987)-654-3210 or via e-mail at irb@abcuni.edu.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. You may refuse or discontinue participation at any time without consequence or prejudice.

If your participation in this research has caused you to feel uncomfortable in any way, or if our research prompted you to consider personal matters about which you are concerned, we encourage you to take advantage of the confidential counseling services offered at ABC University. You can contact a counselor at the Life Career and Advising Center (LCAC) at 732-555-5555.

Signing your name below indicates that you have read and understand the contents of this Consent Form and that you agree to participate in this study.

### **Consent**

I am 18 years of age or older and have read the above information and I fully understand the nature of my participation. I understand that my involvement in this study will be confidential and that if a summary of the results is used for educational or publication purposes, my individual results will not be identified. I also understand that I have the right to terminate my participation at any time during the study. Lastly, I understand the risks of participating in the study, including the self-consciousness I may feel while participating.

Participant's Signature:

Researcher's Signature:

Printed Name:

Printed Name:

Date:

Date: