

Developing a ‘Recipe’ for Success in ESP Experimental Research (Phase II): Testing and Improving a Protocol

Results:

This project was aimed at testing and improving an experimental protocol for successful ESP research derived from a previous phase of research (Perez-Navarro, 2003).

One first study (N=60) was conducted to explore a set of participants’ traits, state, and environmental factors as predictors of the study success. Five variables showed significant associations with the participants’ ESP scores at an $\alpha = .01$. These were: *sensory adaptation, concern on the external environment, absorption, and task disorientation during the Ganzfeld stimulation as well as pre-session energetic arousal*. A stepwise forward logistic regression analysis, performed on the predictors with p-values of .05 or less, showed a 3 variable solution. Thus, the probability of obtaining a hit in a given experiment was accounted by *pre-session energetic arousal, concern about the external environment, and task disorientation* during the Ganzfeld stimulation.

On the basis of the most successful predictors in this study a second experiment was designed and conducted. This second study (N=90) showed a significant hit rate of 33% ($z=1.86$, $p= 0.03$, one tail). Only four of the predictors tested replicated both significance and direction from the previous study. These were neuroticism, sensory adaptation, absorption, and task disorientation during the Ganzfeld stimulation. Three further variables (practice of mental disciplines, pre-session arousal, and arousal during the Ganzfeld stimulation) replicated direction but did not reach statistical significance in this second series.

Post-hoc analysis in this second series proved that operating simultaneously on three domains (participant selection, pre and on-session state, and post-hoc indicators of the occurrence of psi), screening for participants and/or weighting sessions, on the basis of the successful predictors observed in the pilot series was an efficient strategy, increasing the rate of success in this second study from 33% to 43.2%.

Published Work:

Pérez Navarro, J. M., & Cox, K. (2012). Context-dependence, visibility, and prediction using state and trait individual differences as moderators of ESP in a Ganzfeld environment. *Europe's Journal of Psychology*, 8(4), 559–572, doi:10.5964/ejop.v8i4.507

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