

GANZFELD ESP RESEARCH: BUILDING ON LESSONS LEARNED

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Background: Since the 1970s, parapsychologists have used the ganzfeld method to test the hypothesis of extrasensory perception (ESP). Meta-analyses investigating variables associated with elevated scoring in ganzfeld ESP studies have identified that selected participants tend to obtain higher scores. Whilst 'creative/artistic' participants are said to perform well in the ganzfeld (e.g. Baptista, Derakhshani & Tressoldi, 2015), there has been little systematic investigation of this question. Furthermore, ganzfeld studies are often under-powered.

Aims: We aim to optimize conditions for psi performance through design features including: selecting participants for creativity plus psi belief, or prior psi experience, or practice of a mental discipline; creating a positive ambience in the laboratory; keeping experimenters motivated by limiting the number of trials to a maximum of 20 each. Methodological quality is optimized through various features including study registration (#1074 on KPU Study Registry); power analysis; using a precognition design. Individual differences in creativity will be explored through the use of validated questionnaires.

Method: Selected participants come to the ganzfeld laboratory for a single session. Following completion of the formal questionnaire measures, the experimenter guides the participant through the procedure, including a relaxation exercise, a 25-minute impression period, and a judging period. After the participant's ratings are submitted, a True RNG randomly selects the precognitive target for the session, and the participant and experimenter learn whether or not the correct target was identified (= a 'hit'). A total of 240 trials will be conducted in three phases: Wave 1 = 60; Wave 2 = 120; Wave 3 = 60.

Preliminary results: Our work was seriously delayed by the covid pandemic and its after-effects. At the time of writing, Wave 1 is completed, and we can report preliminary informal results. However, the pre-registered Confirmatory analysis plan is to combine all 240 trials for optimal statistical power. The Wave 1 hit-rate is 27% (MCE = 25%). Data collection for Wave 2 and Wave 3 will be completed by mid-February 2024.

Keywords: Ganzfeld, Precognition, Creativity

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