Jamais Vu: Induced Memory Loss Through Semantic Satiation

Loftus, Andrew

Ribak, Nadav

This experiment examines the effectiveness of triggers and effects of jamais vu on students in high school by comparing reports of jamais vu. It was predicted that jamais vu would be triggered more often and more intensely with visual and kinetic stimuli rather than with visual and auditory stimuli. Jamais vu is the opposite of deja vu - it occurs when one sees something they are consciously aware that they have seen before yet experiences a sense of detachment or unfamiliarity about the object. This experimentation was conducted by handing out five different handout forms, two requiring the repeated writing of a word and the other two requiring the mental rehearsal of a word and visualization of that same word on a piece of paper in front of the subjects, both over the period of one minute. The last form was for a control group - it consisted of a simple arithmetic problem set. These forms were followed by a short survey to assess intensity of the phenomena experienced and obtain information for secondary analysis including grade, age, gender, sleep habits, rigor of study, and handedness. It was found that a combination of kinetic and visual stimuli will more often trigger jamais vu, compared to the combination of auditory and visual stimuli. The participants' demographic information also had direct or indirect trends with the perceived intensity of subject’s jamais vu. The contributions of the project and applications extend to mental health research. With mental illnesses relating to memory loss or Capgras delusions, jamais vu is hypothesized to be the trigger of these losses of cognitive long-term memory. This experiment could aid in the minimization of these effects through deeper understanding of its causes.

Awards Won: