

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

In order for research to result in benefit and minimise risk of harm, it must be conducted ethically.

The University follows the OECD Frascati manual definition of **research activity**: “creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications”. As such this covers activities undertaken by members of staff, postgraduate research students, and both taught postgraduate and undergraduate students working on dissertations/projects.

The individual undertaking the research activity is known as the “principal researcher”.

This form must be completed and approved prior to undertaking any research activity.

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

1	Full Name:	Lottie Steel			
2	Tick all boxes that apply:	Member of staff:	☐	Honorary research fellow:	☐
	Undergraduate Student	☒	Taught Postgraduate Student	☐	Postgraduate Research Student
3	Faculty/School:	Psychology and Counselling			
4	Campus:	Swansea, SA1			
5	E-mail address:	2404191@student.uwtsd.ac.uk			
6	Contact Telephone Number:				
7	Project Title	Do short-form videos have an impact on students' attention span?			
8	Proposed Start Date	Nov 2026	Proposed End Date	May 2027	
For students:					
9	Student Number:	2404191			
10	Programme of Study:	Psychology			
11	Supervisor:	Kate Williams			

SECTION B: Internal and External Ethical Guidance Materials

	Please list the core ethical guidance documents that have been referred to during the completion of this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research ethics, location-specific codes of research ethics, and also any specific ethical guidance relating to the proposed methodology). Please tick to confirm that your research proposal adheres to these codes and guidelines. You may add rows to this table if needed.	
1	UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Policy	☒
2	UWTSD Research Data Management Policy	☒
3	UWTSD Open Access Publications Policy	☒
4	<i>British Psychological Society Code of Ethics and Conduct (2021)</i>	☒
5	<i>British Psychological Society Code of Human Research Ethics (2021)</i>	☒
6	<i>British Psychological Society Ethics Guidelines for Internet-Mediated Research (2021)</i>	☒

7	Other guidance Documents (Add here)	☐
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SECTION C: Details of Research Activity

	Introduction to the Research (maximum 300 words per section) Ensure that you write for a <u>Non-Specialist Audience</u> when outlining your response to the points below: • <i>Purpose of Research Activity</i> • <i>Proposed Research Question</i> • <i>Aims of Research Activity</i> • <i>Objectives of Research Activity</i> Demonstrate, briefly, how <u>Existing Research</u> has informed the proposed activity and explain: • <i>What the research activity will add to the body of knowledge</i> • <i>How it addresses an area of importance.</i>
1	Purpose of Research Activity The purpose of this study is to examine the impact short-form videos, typically viewed on social media platforms, has on attention span. This topic has become increasingly researched due to the expansion of short-form video availability in our everyday engagement with digital platforms. Previous research by Alghamdi and Njod (2024) investigated the effects of engaging regularly with TikTok and general social media use on employees. Similarly, Marathe and Kanage (2024) used an online survey to investigate social media usage patterns and difficulties sustaining attention during cognitively demanding tasks. These studies found that there was a significant association between higher consumption of short-form content via social media and increased difficulty maintaining attention. This can suggest that short-form content consumption may be associated with changes in cognitive functioning, particularly sustained attention. Ahmed and Ahafi (2026) have more recently investigated the possible reason for why short-form content impacts attention span. The frequent stimulation of short-form videos (no longer than 30 seconds) creates a pattern of rewards that engages the brain's dopamine system; this can lead to a cycle of craving and overstimulation. This is particularly pertinent to university students, as attention is key for engagement with academic studies. Therefore, to investigate this, Haliti and Sadiku (2024) conducted a study with undergraduate students looking at the impact frequent exposure to short reels has on attention span. They collected data through a self-report survey and the Sustained Attention to Response Task (SART). The findings revealed that there was a negative correlation between time spent exposed to short-form content and the ability to sustain attention, and this in turn, had an impact on their academic performance. This suggests that students who spend more time watching short video reels were more susceptible to attentional decrease and performed worse in their academic studies. In addition, Sun and Chao (2024), discovered that excessive social media use contributes to attention problems through media multitasking behaviours, which mediate the relationship between social media engagement and decreased academic performance among students. Therefore, this research will add to the body of research to examine whether watching short-form videos affect cognitive functioning, specifically attention span, among undergraduate university students. Reference List Alghamdi, R., & Njod A. (2024). The impact of TikTok on employees' attention span. <i>International Journal of Professional Business Review</i>, 9(11). https://doi.org/10.26668/businessreview/2024.v9i11.5144 Ahmed, M., & Shafi, S. R. (2026). The dopamine trap: Effects of short-form video (SFV) addiction on mental health. <i>Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association</i>, 76(7), 1193–1194. https://doi.org/10.47391/JPMA.31911 Marathe, A., & Kanage, R. (2024). Decrease In Attention Span Due To Short-Format Content on Social Media. <i>Multi-Disciplinary Journal</i>, 1(2581-9879). Maharashtra. Haliti-Sylaj, T., & Sadiku, A. (2024). Impact of Short Reels on Attention Span and Academic Performance of Undergraduate Students. <i>Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics (Online)</i>, 10(3). https://doi.org/10.32601/ejal.10306

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	Sun, W., & Chao, M. (2024). Exploring the influence of excessive social media use on academic performance through media multitasking and attention problems: a three-dimension usage perspective. <i>Education and Information Technologies</i>, 29(18), 23981–24003. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-024-12811-y (this box should expand as you type)
2	Research Question(s) Do short-form videos impact students' attention span? (this box should expand as you type)
3	Aims of Research Activity This study aims to investigate the impact of exposure to short-form video content on attention span among undergraduate students. (this box should expand as you type)
4	Objectives of Research Activity • Administer the Multidimensional Short-Form Video Use Motivation Scale (Yang et al., 2026) • Expose participants to either a long form video or short form videos. • Measure attention span using the Sustained Attention Span Test (SART). • Compare SART performance between pre and post exposure to videos. • Compare SART performance between those who watched the long video vs. short videos • Compare SART performance between those high & low in short-form engagement motivation • Examine any interaction effects of the above. (this box should expand as you type)
	Proposed data collection methods (maximum 600 words) Provide a brief summary of all the methods that may be used in the research activity to collect data, making it clear what specific techniques may be used. If methods other than those listed in this section are deemed appropriate later, additional ethical approval for those methods will be needed. You do not need to justify the methods here, but should instead describe how you intend to collect the data necessary for you to complete your project.
5	Participants will be undergraduate students studying any Psychology related course at UWTSD who will be recruited to take part in the study via EMS. Before starting, they will be presented with an information sheet and consent form on Qualtrics. Once informed consent has been obtained, participants can start the study. Participants will firstly be asked to complete demographic questions of age and gender. They will also be asked to indicate how many hours a day on average they spend watching short reel videos. Next, they will answer questions to measure their motivations for watching short-form content, using the Yang et al. (2026) Multidimensional Short-Form Video Use Motivational Scale. There are 5 elements in the questionnaire to identify motivations towards short-form content. The five elements are fun seeking, information seeking, convenience, escapism, and social disconnection avoidance. There are 22 items on this scale, measured on a 5-point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The total score of the questionnaire will indicate the participants' motivations towards engaging with short-form videos. A high score would indicate that a participant strongly agrees that the motivations described in the questionnaire are reasons why they watch short-form videos. The next task participants will do is the Sustained Attention to Response Task (SART); this will be used to measure attention span. This test will be programmed using Super Labs. A rapid sequence of digits (typically numbers 1 through 9) appears randomly in the centre of a screen. On “Go Trials” the participant must press a corresponding key as quickly and accurately as possible for every digit. On “No-Go” Trials, the participant must withhold their response whenever the digit “3” appears. The task takes roughly 5 minutes to complete, and attention span will be calculated based on accuracy in the go and no-go trials and reaction time (RT).

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	After this, participants will be randomly allocated into one of two groups. One group will be asked to watch 3 minutes' worth of short reel videos (each lasting less than 30 seconds). The other group will be asked to watch a single video 3 minutes in length. Once participants have watched the relevant videos, they will complete the SART again. Counterbalancing measures will be used for video group allocation, and randomisation procedures will be used during the presentation of stimuli in the pre and post video SART. Therefore, the study will involve a 2 (Use and motivation of engagement with short-form videos: High vs. low) x 2 (Video group: long reel vs. multiple short reels) x 2 (timepoint: attention performance pre vs. post watching of videos) mixed experimental design. The IVs of Use and motivation of engagement with short-form videos and Video group will be the between subject factors and the SART being administered at the two timepoints of pre and post video watching will be the within subject factor. The DVs will be attention performance accuracy and response times on the SART. To analyse the data, it will be transferred to SPSS and analysed using two (one for accuracy and one for reaction time) mixed ANOVAs. Further exploratory analysis will also examine any attention performance differences based on number of hours per day on average participants report spending time watching short form videos. Reference List: Yang, S., Yang, H., Kang, Y., Bae, Y., Kim, N. Y., Kim, P., & Uran, O. (2026). What motivates short-form video consumption? Development and validation of a multidimensional short-form video use motivation scale. <i>Acta Psychologica</i>, 269, 107478. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2026.107478 (this box should expand as you type)
	Location of research activity
6	UWTSD Psychology Labs in the IQ Building on the SA1 campus

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity

1	Does your research involve collaborating partners at another institution or organisation?	YES	Click to continue to APPENDIX 1	NO	Continue to the next section
2	Have you completed appendix 2?	YES	☐	NO	☒

SECTION E: Scope of Research Activity

	Will the research activity include:	YES	NO
1	Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	☒	☐
2	Use of interviews?	☐	☒
3	Use of focus groups?	☐	☒

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4	Use of participant diaries?	☐	☒
5	Use of video or audio recording?	☐	☒
6	Use of computer-generated log files?	☒	☐
7	Participant observation with their knowledge?	☐	☒
8	Participant observation without their knowledge?	☐	☒
9	Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☐	☒
10	Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☐	☒
11	Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☐	☒
12	Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	☒
13	Use of procedures that involve deception?	☐	☒
14	Administration of any substance, agent or placebo?	☐	☒
15	Working with live vertebrate animals?	☐	☒
16	Procedures that may have a negative impact on the environment?	☐	☒
17	Other primary data collection methods. Please indicate the type of data collection method(s) below.	☐	☒
	Details of any other primary data collection method: (this box should expand as you type)		

If you have ticked NO to every question, then the research activity is (ethically) low risk and you may skip section E and continue to section F.

If YES to any question, then no research activity should be undertaken until full ethical approval has been obtained.

SECTION F: Intended Participants

	Who are the intended participants:	YES	NO
1	Students or staff at the University?	☒	☐
2	Adults (over the age of 18 and competent to give consent)?	☒	☐
3	Children and Young People under the age of 18? (Consent from Parent, Carer or Guardian will be required)	☐	☒
4	Prisoners?	☐	☒
5	Young offenders?	☐	☒
6	Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator or a gatekeeper?	☐	☒
7	People engaged in illegal activities?	☐	☒
8	Others. Please indicate the participants below, and specifically any group who may be unable to give consent.	☐	☒
	Details of any other participant groups: (this box should expand as you type)		

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9	Are your participants classed as vulnerable people?	YES	Click to continue to APPENDIX 2	NO	Continue to the next section
10	Have you completed appendix 4?	YES	☐	NO	☒

Participant numbers and source Provide an estimate of the expected number of participants. How will you identify participants and how will they be recruited?	
11	How many participants are expected? <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
12	Who will the participants be? <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
13	How will you identify the participants? <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
14	Will you be excluding any groups of people, and if so, what is the rationale for that? <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
15	Will the research involve any element of deception? If yes, please describe why this is necessary and whether participants will be informed at the end of the study <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
16	Describe whether participants will be able to withdraw from the study, and up to what point (e.g., if data is to be anonymised). If withdrawal is not possible, after a certain point, explain why not. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>

Information for participants:	YES	NO	N/A
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17	Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	☒	☐	☐
18	Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	☒	☐	☐
19	Will you obtain written consent for participation?	☐	☒	☐
20	Will you explain to participants that refusal to participate in the research will not affect their treatment or education (if relevant)?	☒	☐	☐
21	If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	☐	☐	☒
22	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	☒	☐	☐
23	With questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?	☒	☐	☐
24	Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?	☒	☐	☐
25	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation, in a way appropriate to the type of research undertaken?	☒	☐	☐
26	If NO to any of above questions, please give an explanation			
	Written consent is not possible for this study as it is being conducted online via Qualtrics and Super Labs. So, instead, to gain informed consent, they must answer all questions about consent before they can complete any part of the study by ticking confirmation boxes. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			

	Information for participants:	YES	NO	N/A
27	Will participants be paid?	☐	☒	☐
28	Is specialist electrical or other equipment to be used with participants?	☐	☒	☐
29	Are there any financial or other interests to the investigator or University arising from this study?	☐	☒	☐
30	Will the research activity involve deliberately misleading participants in any way, or the partial or full concealment of the specific study aims?	☐	☒	☐
31	If YES to any question, please provide full details			
	N/A <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			

SECTION G: Anticipated Risks

	Outline any anticipated risks that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers and/or the University, and the steps that will be taken to address them.	
	Risks to participants For example: sector-specific health & safety, emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information. If you have identified in section D that there are no participants, then enter N/A and go skip to question 3.	
1	Risk to participants: 1. There may be potential for psychological distress due to being asked questions about motivations towards and amount of time spent watching short-form videos. It may cause participants to reflect on habits or feel distressed about the amount of time they spend watching short form videos. Also, participants may feel frustration during the SART if they find they are having difficulty providing the correct responses during	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to participants:</i> 1. Participants will be informed prior to taking part that the focus of the study will be on understanding engagement with short form videos and completing a fast paced attention task, so they are informed about what to expect prior to consenting to take part. They will also be informed that they can skip any questions if they feel uncomfortable answering or can stop participating in the study at any time without reason. Following the BPS code of research ethics, the information sheet will include that participants will

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	the task and then worrying about their attention abilities. 2. Participants will only be informed of the full nature of the study during the debrief. 3. Participants may feel pressured to take part in the study to receive course credits. They may also not fully understand the study that they have signed up for. 4. Confidentiality risks of disclosing personal information. 5. Concerns regarding the content of the videos being used in the study. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	need to understand that if they become distressed at any point in the study, they have the right to withdraw at any point. The debrief sheet will include the researchers' and supervisors' contact details, alongside the university wellbeing service details if they are experiencing any distress. 2. To mitigate risk, adequate information will be given to participants to make an informed decision about taking part. Participants will receive an appropriate explanation of why this was involved in the study in the debriefing. If they do not feel comfortable with this, they have the right to withdraw their data. 3. To alleviate these risks, participants will receive an information sheet explaining the study's procedures, what they will be asked to do, the approximate duration, and any foreseeable risks. They will also have the opportunity to ask any questions before completing the consent form. Participants will be reassured that if they withdraw at any point, they will not have any penalties for their credits so that they are not pressured into taking part if they do not feel comfortable. In the information sheet, they will be told all about their right to withdraw throughout the whole study. It will be clear that withdrawal will not be possible once they leave the labs, as data is collected anonymously. 4. There are procedures put in place to keep all data safe by following GDPR. Data will be enclosed in password-protected UWTSD accounts. Data will be collected anonymously. 5. To minimise this risk, both videos will contain animal-related content and will be three minutes in duration. One condition will involve watching a single video presenting facts about animals, while the other will involve watching a compilation of short, humorous animal clips. Both videos will be watched beforehand to make sure they do not contain any inappropriate or distressing content and piloting of the study to obtain feedback on the appropriateness of the videos will also take place. The link to these videos are also provided in this form for the ethics panel to review to confirm appropriateness. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
	If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use) or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action (e.g. criminal activity), give details of the procedures to deal with these issues, including any support/advice (e.g. helpline numbers) to be offered to participants. Note that where applicable, consent procedures should make it clear that if something potentially or actually illegal is discovered in the course of a project, it may need to be disclosed to the proper authorities	
2	N/A <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	
	Risks to the investigator For example: personal health & safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest	
3	Risk to the investigator:	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to the investigator:</i>

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	1. Psychological stress or pressure when managing participants, technical issues or unexpected problems during data collection. For example, the SART task could go wrong at times if not practised. 2. There is a risk of having to deal with distressed individuals and not knowing what to do to help alleviate their stress or receiving unwanted communication from participants. 3. The researcher may experience fatigue or make mistakes when conducting multiple sessions or entering and analysing data. 4. There is a risk to the researcher working in the lab alone with a participant. 5. Risk of accusation of harm/impropriety <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	1. To alleviate risk, the investigator will familiarise themselves with the procedure before any data collection. Pilot studies will be conducted to check if there are any technical difficulties and to practice before testing in participants. The researcher should seek support from the supervisor if feeling overwhelmed or if any difficulties arise. 2. When researchers deal with distressed participants, they must ensure that they understand how to signpost participants to support services. Only university email addresses will be provided to participants and not any personal contact details for any queries, and any unwanted communication will be reported to the supervisor. 3. To prevent this from happening, the researcher should schedule sessions appropriately, take breaks and check data for errors before beginning statistical analysis. 4. The research study will only take place during working hours of Monday-Friday 9am-5pm and the researcher will remove themselves from a situation they feel uncomfortable and report to the lab manager/IQ reception and follow all lab protocols. 5. The researcher will ensure to follow the UWTSD and BPS ethical procedures outlined in the guidelines noted in this form for conducting research. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
University/institutional risks For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection		
4	Risk to the University: The university may face risks if the study does not follow ethical guidelines or data protection regulations throughout the research process. For example, mishandling participant data or EMS codes could result in a GDPR breach and the unauthorised disclosure of identifiable information. This could lead to regulatory consequences, participant complaints, and reputational damage to the university because research data is not adequately protected. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to the University:</i> To minimise risks to the university, the study will adhere to the British Psychological Society (BPS) ethical guidelines, ensuring informed consent is obtained from all participants. Confidentiality will be maintained by avoiding the collection of directly identifiable personal information. In accordance with GDPR requirements, all research data will be stored securely using encrypted storage on password-protected devices/accounts approved by the university. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
Environmental risks For example: accidental spillage of pollutants, damage to local ecosystems		
5	Risk to the environment: There is little environmental risk in this study other than requiring the printing of debrief sheets. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to environment:</i> The study will be run entirely online in the labs via Qualtrics and Super Labs. No printing of information sheets or consent forms is required as these will be presented on the screen and debrief sheets will only be printed based on number of participants signed up to the study on a daily basis.

SECTION H: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

	Feedback What debriefing and feedback will be provided to participants; how will this be done and when?
1	Participants will receive a verbal debrief by the researcher and a paper copy of the debrief form immediately after completing the study, allowing them to refer to it after leaving the laboratory. The debrief will explain the purpose of the study and how the collected data will be used and analysed. Participants will be fully informed that they were randomly allocated into one of the two groups to watch either a 3-minute video or a 3-minute video of short reels and that their attention performance was being assessed via the SART. The debrief sheet will include the contact details of the researcher and supervisor should participants have any questions or concerns. There will also be contact details for wellbeing. Finally, before participants leave the labs, they will be reminded that if they wanted to withdraw their data, they must do so before they leave the labs as after that point it would not be possible to trace back to them. (this box should expand as you type)
	Informed consent Describe the arrangements to inform potential participants, before providing consent, of what is involved in participating. Describe the arrangements for participants to provide full consent before data collection begins. If gaining consent in this way is inappropriate, explain how consent will be obtained and recorded in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation.
2	The first thing that participants will be shown on screen when they enter the lab is the information sheet. They will read this sheet before consenting to the study so they understand what will be involved in this study. The information sheet will tell them what the purpose of the study is; this study aims to investigate the impact of exposure to short-form video content on attention span among undergraduate students. They will then be told what is involved in taking part in the study. It will involve them completing questions on time spent watching short form videos and a questionnaire on their motivation to engaging with short form videos. They will then do a task measuring their attention span using the SART. They will then watch a video for 3 minutes and complete the SART again after watching the video. Any risks in the study will be explained on the sheet. The last part will be informing participants of their right to withdraw from this study. They have the option to withdraw at any point throughout the study, and if they do withdraw, they will have no penalty. They will be given the option at the end of the study if they would like for their data to be used in the study, but they will be told that once they leave the labs, their data will be submitted for analysis and not possible to trace back to them to withdraw. After they have read through the information sheet, they will be taken to the consent form page. Before obtaining any data, they will have to consent to the study. This will be obtained by tick boxes, which will be completed on Qualtrics. To gain consent, it must be voluntary and not forced to be completed. (this box should expand as you type)
	Confidentiality / Anonymity Set out how anonymity of participants and confidentiality will be ensured in any outputs. If anonymity is not being offered, explain why this is the case.
3	Participation in this study will be fully anonymous, because there will not be any personally identifiable information, such as names, email addresses or student identification numbers linked to the data. This means that individual participants' responses will not be identifiable to them. All data will be handled confidentially and accessed only by the researcher and supervisor. Data will be stored in accordance with the university's data protection policies and GDPR requirements and used only for the research project. The data will be stored under university account password protection. EMS codes will be stored separately from questionnaire responses and attention performance data to prevent them from being linked to individual participants. The researcher will also keep the data anonymous and confidential by not disclosing or discussing any individual specific participant's data with anyone. These measures will help protect participants' privacy and maintain confidentiality throughout the research process. (this box should expand as you type)

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Copies of any written consent form, written information and all other explanatory material should accompany this application. If you have included these then please list the documents included here.

4	1. Demographics Questions: Age (please write): Gender (please tick): Male Female Non-binary Prefer-not to say 2. Time spent watching short form videos question: On average, how many hours a day do you spend watching short-form video reels? • None, • less than 1 hour, • 1-2 hours, • 2-3 hours, • 3-4 hours, • 4-5 hours, • 5-6 hours, • more than 6 hours 3. Animal videos being used: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K5o7U1WrJXc&list=PLRxeiur1Yjcc https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ebeNeQFUMa0&list=PLRxeiur1Yjcc&index=4 4. Short Video Consumption Questionnaire
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Table 2
Results of exploratory factor analysis (N = 719).

Item	Factor loading					Com.
	1	2	3	4	5	
1. I watch short-form videos to kill boredom	0.81	−0.02	−0.01	0.08	0.05	0.72
2. When I have free time, I often pass time watching short-form videos	0.73	−0.02	0.05	0.06	0.06	0.62
3. I watch short-form videos for fun.	0.46	0.14	0.29	0.00	−0.16	0.48
4. I watch short-form videos for information.	0.08	0.70	0.01	−0.03	0.05	0.65
5. I watch short-form videos to easily get information I need.	0.11	0.70	0.07	0.00	−0.03	0.61
6. Overall, I watch short-form videos because they are very useful in my life.	−0.01	0.64	0.12	0.00	0.09	0.57
7. I watch short-form videos to build knowledge or learn new things.	−0.01	0.81	−0.05	0.05	0.04	0.67
8. I watch short-form videos to acquire new skills quickly and easily.	−0.08	0.60	0.06	0.08	0.06	0.50
9. I watch short-form videos because each video is short and can be watched quickly.	0.04	0.04	0.57	0.03	−0.05	0.50
10. I prefer short-form videos over longer videos because they fit better into my busy schedule.	−0.06	0.10	0.57	0.07	0.01	0.49
11. I watch short-form videos because the algorithm conveniently recommends video content.	0.14	−0.09	0.65	−0.02	0.03	0.50
12. I watch short-form videos because I'm curious about what will be recommended next.	0.02	−0.03	0.54	0.03	0.22	0.41
13. I watch short-form videos because I can see personalized content	0.05	0.07	0.67	−0.02	0.02	0.52
14. I watch short-form videos to forget personal problems.	−0.07	0.06	0.02	0.73	0.10	0.66
15. When I'm feeling down, I watch short-form videos on my phone.	−0.01	0.02	0.05	0.73	−0.01	0.59
16. I watch short-form videos to distract myself from everyday annoyances.	0.01	0.00	0.09	0.73	0.00	0.60
17. I watch short-form videos to lift my mood.	0.15	0.06	−0.02	0.72	−0.10	0.63
18. I watch short-form videos to relax and relieve stress.	0.15	−0.02	0.02	0.63	0.06	0.59
19. I watch short-form videos to ease my loneliness	0.07	−0.04	0.00	0.55	0.29	0.57
20. I watch short-form videos to feel connected with others	0.01	0.00	−0.01	0.03	0.80	0.66

Table 2 (continued)

Item	Factor loading					Com.
	1	2	3	4	5	
21. I watch short-form videos because I am afraid of missing out on popular memes or viral content.	−0.02	0.06	0.06	−0.02	0.66	0.55
22. I watch short-form videos to share them with people around me.	0.04	0.09	−0.06	0.05	0.63	0.53

Note. Com. = communality; bolded cells indicate factor loadings.

Use (Emotional Dependence and Pervasive Use; e.g., “I feel irritable when I am unable to watch short-form videos”) and Immersion-Driven Use (Daily Interference, Control Difficulty, Time Distortion, and Mindless Use; e.g., “I often lose track of time while watching short-form videos”). Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*), with higher scores indicating more intensive use (α = 0.77–0.85).

3.1.2.2. State boredom. State boredom was assessed using the Korean version of the Multidimensional State Boredom Scale (K-MSBS; Han & Song, 2023), which evaluates five facets of boredom: disengagement (e.g., “I am stuck in a situation that feels irrelevant”), high arousal, low arousal, inattention, and altered time perception. The 29 items are rated on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*), with higher scores reflecting greater boredom. Internal consistency was high across subscales (α = 0.86–0.92).

3.1.2.3. Self-control. Self-regulatory capacity was measured using the Korean version of the Brief Self-Control Scale (K-BSCS; Hong et al., 2012), which assesses self-discipline (e.g., “I am good at resisting temptation”) and concentration (e.g., “I am able to work effectively toward long-term goals”). The 11 items are rated on a 5-point scale (1 = *not at all* to 5 = *very much*), with higher scores indicating stronger self-control. Internal consistency was acceptable (α = 0.87).

3.1.2.4. Behavioral activation and behavioral inhibition. General motivational tendencies were assessed using the 20-item Korean version of the Behavioral Inhibition System and Behavioral Activation System scale (BIS/BAS; Kim & Kim, 2001). The 7-item BIS assesses sensitivity to aversive cues. The 13-item BAS measures approach motivation includes three subscales: Reward Responsiveness, Drive, and Fun Seeking. Items are rated on a 4-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 4 = *strongly agree*). Internal consistency was acceptable to good (BIS α = 0.74; BAS α = 0.76–0.78).

3.1.2.5. Loneliness and social isolation. Loneliness and social isolation were assessed using the 6-item Loneliness and Social Isolation (LSIS) scale, which evaluates three domains: social support (e.g., “There are people who can help me with everyday matters”), social networks (e.g., “...how many people are you close enough to meet in person at least once a month?”), and loneliness (e.g., “I feel lonely”). Items are rated on a 4-point scale, with higher scores indicating greater loneliness or social isolation (Cronbach's α = 0.62 to 0.82; Hwang et al., 2021).

3.1.3. Procedure

Data were collected through an online survey administered by a professional research agency. Participants provided informed consent before completing the survey and received a small incentive upon completion. The study received ethical approval from the university's Institutional Review Board (ewha-202411-0033-01).

5. Information Sheet:



Participant Information Sheet

Title of Study: Do short-form videos impact students' attention span.

Research Team: Lottie Steel – 2404191@student.uwtsd.ac.uk, and supervisor Dr Kate Williams - kate.williams@uwtsd.ac.uk

Date: 01/11/2026

Please take the time to read the following study information carefully before deciding whether to take part in this study and ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

Purpose of Research:

The purpose of this study is to investigate whether there is any impact of exposure to short-form videos on attention span among university students.

What does taking part involve:

This study will involve completing an in-person experimental lab-based task. During this study you will be required to do the following on the computer:

- Provide demographic information of age and gender.
- Answer a question asking about the amount of time you spend watching short form videos on average each day.
- Complete a questionnaire asking about your use and motivations for watching short form videos.
- Complete the Sustained Attention to Response Task (SART).
 - This will involve being presented with a rapid sequence of digits appearing randomly in the centre of the screen. On “Go Trials” you will be required to press a corresponding key as quickly and accurately as possible for every digit. On “No-Go” Trials, you must withhold your response whenever a designated digit appears.
 - This task will take approximately five minutes to complete, and your attention span will be calculated from the number of accurate trial responses you provide and reaction times.
 - Further instructions regarding which keys to press or to withhold will be provided at the start of the task.
- Then, you will be required to watch a 3-minute-long video about animals.
- Finally, you will be asked to complete the SART again.

At the end of the study, you will be debriefed by the researcher, and you will be provided with the study debrief sheet.

How long will the study take:

This study is expected to take around 40 minutes to complete, and you will receive 4 EMS credits.

Benefits of participating:

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those participating in the study, it is hoped that this work will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the impact of short form videos on attention span.

Risks of participating:

This study will focus on whether short video reels impact attention span. This may be an area of concern for some people. It may result in reflection on habits or consideration about the amount of time you spend watching online videos. You may also feel frustration when completing the SART or have concerns about your attention span following completion of this task. Therefore, if you feel that the above elements of this study may be of concern to you, then you are advised not to take part.

Participation and withdrawal:

Participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you also have the option of not answering any questions you do not feel comfortable answering. You can withdraw at any point during the study without penalty. If you wish to withdraw during the study, please inform the researcher. You do not need to give a reason for withdrawing. However, you will not be able to withdraw any data after leaving the labs as it is being collected anonymously, so you would need to inform the researcher before leaving the lab if you wanted to withdraw your data.

How will your data be used and processed:

Your data will only be used for the purpose of the research activity. Your participant EMS number will only be used on your arrival to the study to confirm your participation time. Your EMS ID will not be related to any study data, instead your data will be assigned a unique and different study ID. This is only be used for the purpose of linking your questionnaire data, which will be collected via Qualtrics to your SART data, which will be collected via Super Labs. This study will also collect demographic data on age and gender. This is for the purpose of descriptive statistics, which form the standard reporting measures in psychology. Once the data is collected, we will aggregate the data for presentation purposes by calculating the mean age and total gender numbers. The researcher will not disclose data information or use it for any other purposes.

How will your data be collected and stored:

All collected raw data will be kept in a raw format and then aggregated for analysis purposes. Computer data will be collected via Super Lab, and this data will be stored on the Super Lab computer within the Psychology labs. It will only be accessed by the researcher through a password-protected university account. All Super Lab data will be anonymous and copied from the lab computer to the researcher's password protected university OneDrive account.

Questionnaire data from Qualtrics will be stored in the researcher's password protected Qualtrics account and downloaded to their password protected university OneDrive account. If there is a need to transfer data by a memory stick, the memory stick will be encrypted, and the data will be deleted once transfer is completed. All data will be subsequently deleted after the module assessment undergoes evaluation by the end-of-year examination board.

How can you contact the researchers if you have any questions:

You can contact the research student via email: Lottie Steel –

2404191@student.uwtsd.ac.uk

You can also contact the research supervisor via email: Kate Williams-

kate.williams@uwtsd.ac.uk

If you have any immediate questions, please ask the researcher now. If you are happy to continue, please read and complete the consent form on the next page.

6. Consent Form:



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

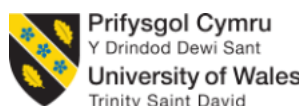
Study Consent Form

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the Information Sheet for the above study and understand that this study will take approximately 40 minutes to complete.	Yes	No
2. I confirm that I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered satisfactorily.	Yes	No
3. I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.	Yes	No
4. I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or giving any reason.	Yes	No
5. I understand that my fully anonymised data will be utilised for only this research study, which is being conducted by a third-year Psychology student for the purpose of their undergraduate dissertation and will be deleted once external examiner approval for the project has been obtained.	Yes	No
6. I understand that taking part in this study will involve completion of a question asking about my time spent watching short reel videos, a questionnaire asking about my time and motivations for watching short form videos, being asked to watch a video with the content involving animals, and completing two rapid speed attention span tasks.	Yes	No

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7. I confirm that I have normal or corrected to normal vision.	Yes	No
8. I understand that I may decline to answer any questions.	Yes	No
9. I understand that any data collected will be anonymous and stored in an anonymous format and once I leave the lab it will not be possible to trace the data back to me to withdraw.	Yes	No
10. I understand that the anonymised data provided will be securely stored and accessible only to the members of the research team directly involved in the study, and that confidentiality will be maintained.	Yes	No
11. I confirm that I am over 18 years old	Yes	No
12. I am aware that if I have concerns about the study, I can contact the researchers at any time during or after the study on Lottie Steel – 2404191@student.uwtsd.ac.uk or the study supervisor Dr Kate Williams: kate.williams@uwtsd.ac.uk should I have any concerns.	Yes	No
13. I understand that I will be debriefed and receive a paper debrief at the end of my participation.	Yes	No
14. I consent to taking part in this study.	Yes	No

7. Debrief Form:



Participant Debrief Sheet

Title of Study: Do short-form videos impact students' attention span

Researcher: Lottie Steel – 2404191@student.uwtsd.ac.uk

Supervisor: Dr Kate Williams – kate.williams@uwtsd.ac.uk

Date: 01/11/2026

Thank you for taking part in this study.

This study is being conducted to explore whether exposure to short-form video content impacts attention span in university students.

Through conducting a controlled laboratory study, we aimed to see if being exposed to either one 3-minute-long video or a 3-minute video composed of multiple short form videos lasting less than 30 seconds has any impact on attentional performance on the Sustained Attention to Response Task (SART). The study will also examine whether there is any difference in SART attention performance between those who report spending different amounts of time typically watching short form videos.

As a reminder, your data will be stored anonymously and confidentially, and it will only be used for the purpose of this research.

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	If you wish to withdraw your data from the study, you must tell the researcher before leaving the lab. After leaving the lab, it will not be possible to withdraw your data as it is being stored anonymously. If taking part in this study has raised any questions or concerns, please contact the researcher: Lottie Steel – 2404191@student.uwtsd.ac.uk or contact the research supervisor: Dr Kate Williams-kate.williams@uwtsd.ac.uk. If you have found any part of this experience to be distressing or concerning, please consider speaking with someone that you trust such as a family member or friend. You may also consider speaking with one of the organisations below: Within UWTSD: - UWSTD Wellbeing Support accessed via the HWB - Student Assistance Support – Free 24-hour confidential helpline 0800 028 3766 Outside UWTSD: - TogetherAll - Sorted Mental Health App - Students’ Union Student Minds (support groups)
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SECTION I: Data Protection and Storage

	Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 “GDPR” and the Data Protection Act 2018 “DPA”)?	YES	NO
1	Personal data means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person (‘data subject’). An identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person. Any video or audio recordings of participants and transcription of such are considered to be personal data.	☒	☐
	If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
2	Age and gender details will be collected as standard reporting measures in psychology but will not be linked to participant names. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
	Does the research involve the processing of special category data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and the Data Protection Act 2018)?	YES	NO
3	Racial or ethnic origin	☐	☒
4	Political opinions	☐	☒
5	Religious or philosophical beliefs	☐	☒
6	Genetic, biometric or health data	☐	☒
7	Sex life or sexual orientation	☐	☒
8	Trade union membership	☐	☒
	If you ticked YES to any of questions L3-L8, provide a description of the data and explain why this special category data needs to be collected to support the research and that it is in the public interest to do so:		

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9	N/A <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
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	Will data from the research activity (collected data, drafts of the thesis, or materials for publication) be stored in any of the following ways?	YES	NO
10	Manual files (i.e. in paper form)?	☐	☒
11	University computers?	☒	☐
12	Private company computers?	☐	☒
13	Home or other personal computers?	☐	☒
14	Laptop computers/ CDs/ Portable disk-drives/ memory sticks?	☐	☒
15	“Cloud” storage or websites?	☒	☐
16	Other – specify:	☐	☒
	For all stored data, explain the measures in place to ensure the security of the data collected, data confidentiality, including details of backup procedures, password protection, encryption, anonymisation and pseudonymisation:		
17	Super Labs data will be collected and stored via a university lab computer, which is accessed via the researcher’s password protected university account and will only contain the participants’ study ID codes (for linking to the Qualtrics data), and the accuracy and response time data from the SART. Age, gender, and questionnaire data will be collected and stored via the researcher’s password protected university Qualtrics account. Only the study ID code will be assigned to this data. The study ID codes will be different to the participants’ EMS ID codes. All data will then be saved/downloaded and stored securely to the researcher’s password protected university Microsoft Office 365 and OneDrive services. Access to the raw data will be restricted to the researcher and supervisor. Data backup will be managed through the university’s approved cloud storage system, in accordance with university data protection policies and GDPR requirements. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

	Data Protection		
	Will the research activity involve any of the following activities:	YES	NO
18	Electronic transfer of data in any form?	☒	☐
19	Sharing of data with others at the University outside of the immediate research team?	☐	☒
20	Sharing of data with other organisations?	☐	☒
21	Export of data outside the UK or importing of data from outside the UK?	☐	☒
22	Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers?	☐	☒
23	Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?	☐	☒
	If YES to any question, please provide full details, explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the GDPR and Data Protection Act (2018) (and/or any international equivalent):		
24	Data will only be stored on university devices and university accounts using password-protected University Office 365 and OneDrive services. Super Lab data will be saved on the lab computer and then transferred/saved only to the researcher’s university OneDrive account (which can be accessed via the lab computer). Qualtrics data will be stored in the researcher’s password protected university Qualtrics account and then downloaded directly to the researcher’s password protected university OneDrive account. Participants will be assigned a unique study identification		

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	code, which will be input to Super Labs and Qualtrics just before the participant enters the lab booth in order for the researcher to then link their Super Labs and Qualtrics data, which will be combined and saved in excel and SPSS files kept in the researchers password protected University OneDrive account. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
	List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity:
25	Researcher- Lottie Steel and Supervisor- Kate Williams <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
	List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:
26	Researcher-Lottie Steel <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
	Give details of data storage arrangements, including security measures in place to protect the data, where data will be stored, how long for, and in what form.
27	Data will only be stored on university devices and university accounts using password-protected University Office 365 and OneDrive services. Super Lab data will be saved on the lab computer and then transferred/saved only to the researcher's university OneDrive account (which can be accessed via the lab computer). Qualtrics data will be stored in the researcher's password protected university Qualtrics account and then downloaded directly to the researcher's password protected university OneDrive account. Participants will be assigned a unique study identification code, which will be input to Super Labs and Qualtrics just before the participant enters the lab booth. Data from Super Labs and Qualtrics will then be combined onto excel and SPSS data sheets, which will be stored in the researcher's password protected University OneDrive account. All data will only be stored until the end of the module is confirmed by the external examiner where it will then be deleted from the university lab computer and from the researcher's university Qualtrics and OneDrive accounts. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
28	Confirm that you have read the UWTSD guidance on data management (see https://www.uwtسد.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/) ☒
29	Confirm that you are aware that you need to keep all data until after your research has completed or the end of your funding ☒

SECTION J: Use of AI tools

Use of generative AI and other AI-based tools There are a number of ethical issues relating to the use of generative AI and other AI-based tools, including data security, output bias, and output errors. In general, you should assume that any generative AI or other AI-based tool that you pay to use is more secure and accurate than one which is free to use.				
Will the research use AI tools to do any of the following:		YES	NO	N/A
1	Capture data?	☐	☒	☐
2	Generate and/or edit text?	☐	☒	☐
3	Generate graphics?	☐	☒	☐
4	Generate video?	☐	☒	☐
5	Generate sound/music?	☐	☒	☐
6	Generate code?	☐	☒	☐

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7	Generate synthetic data?	☐	☒	☐
8	Analyse data?	☐	☒	☐
9	Analyse personal or sensitive data?	☐	☒	☐
10	Classify data?	☐	☒	☐
11	Do you intend to use the free version of any AI tools?	☐	☒	☐
If you have answered YES to any of questions O1-O11, please provide justification detailing why this is necessary for the research.				
12	N/A <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			

SECTION K: Declaration

	The information which I have provided is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have attempted to identify any risks and issues related to the research activity and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants. In submitting this application I hereby confirm that I undertake to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice which is published on the website: https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/research/research-ethics/		
1	Signature of applicant:		Date:
2	Supervisor:	Kate Williams	Date: 23.10.26
3	Signature:	Kate Williams	

APPENDIX 1: External Collaborative Research Activity

INSTITUTION 1				
A2.1	Name			
A2.2	Researcher name and position			
A2.3	Role in project (e.g. co-investigator)			
A2.4	Contact e-mail address			
A2.5	External Ethical Approval <i>Please detail the ethical approval required and arrangements for this partner. See Section 14 of the UWTSd Research Ethics and Integrity Policy. If approved, please supply confirmation.</i>	Obtained?	YES	NO
		☐	☐	☐

APPENDIX 2: Research with Vulnerable People

Will the research involve data processing involving the following data subjects:		YES	NO
A4.1	Children under 16	☐	☒
A4.2	Adults with learning disabilities	☐	☒

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A4.3	Adults with other forms of mental incapacity or mental illness	☐	☒
A4.4	Adults in emergency situations	☐	☒
A4.5	Prisoners or young offenders	☐	☒
A4.6	Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator, e.g. members of staff, students	☐	☒
A4.7	People who have not given their explicit consent to participate in the project	☐	☒
A4.8	People engaged in illegal activities	☐	☒
A4.9	Any other people who can be considered vulnerable in the context of this project	☐	☒
Please justify the inclusion of the above people (if applicable), explaining why the research cannot be conducted on non-vulnerable people.			
A4.10	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
Please give details of extra steps taken to assure the protection of vulnerable people participating in the research. You should describe any arrangements to be made for obtaining consent from a legal representative.			
A4.11	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
It is the researcher's responsibility to check whether a DBS check (or equivalent) is required and to obtain one if it is needed. Please confirm:			
A4.12	DBS Check required?	YES ☐	NO ☒
A4.13	DBS certificate obtained?	YES ☐	NO ☐
		N/A ☒	