



## Participant Information Sheet

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Jason Hall, and I am a master's student in Social and Psychological Research at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. As part of my academic requirements, I am conducting a research project under the supervision of Dr. Sahba Besharati and Prof. Benjamin Rosman, focusing on South African perspectives on consciousness and artificial intelligence (AI). The objective of this research is to delve into the local community's views and interpretations regarding the meanings and functions of consciousness and to explore the applications of these perspectives to AI.

As a component of this study, I extend an invitation to you to participate in an online survey. This survey involves completing a demographic questionnaire followed by three open-ended questions, requiring approximately 5 to 10 minutes of your time.

There will be no personal costs associated with your participation in this project, and while you will not receive any direct benefits, there are also no disadvantages or penalties for choosing not to participate or for withdrawing from the study at any point. You retain the right to withdraw at any time or to refrain from answering any questions without any repercussions. Your responses will be confidential and anonymous, as no names or identifying information will be collected. The data provided will be securely stored and will not be disclosed to third parties.

However, your responses may undergo AI-assisted analysis, which may involve their processing by a third-party database hosting the AI software. Despite this, your anonymity is assured as your responses will not be linked to any personal identifiers. Furthermore, only AI models that commit to protecting the confidentiality and privacy of participant data will be used. Although we have implemented strict data security measures, there is always a residual risk of data breaches or unauthorized access when data is processed and stored electronically. By participating in this study, you consent to having your responses submitted to an AI database system hosted by a third party and acknowledge the associated privacy risks.

Your participation will be represented by a participant number in the final research report. Should you experience any distress or discomfort during the study, you may withdraw or choose to resume at a later time. Free support and counselling services are available at the Emthonjeni Centre at Wits. For any inquiries during or after the research, you are welcome to contact me using the details provided below. The findings of this study will be documented in a research report accessible online through the university library website. The data collected will be securely stored in an encrypted iCloud account for five years. Additionally, the data will be shared with my supervisors and a team of researchers at the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research for potential use in future research.

Should you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical aspects of this study, please contact the **University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical)** at +27 (0) 11 717 1408 or via email at [hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za](mailto:hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za).

Yours sincerely,

Jason Hall

Email: [1726496@students.wits.ac.za](mailto:1726496@students.wits.ac.za)

Cell: +27 79 509 8510

Supervisors:

Dr. Sahba Besharati ([Sahba.Besharati@wits.ac.za](mailto:Sahba.Besharati@wits.ac.za))

Prof. Benjamin Rosman ([benjros@gmail.com](mailto:benjros@gmail.com))