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The Relationship between Harmonic Priming and Stroop Interference: A Study of Individual Differences

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Abstract: Harmonic priming is responding to harmonically expected (tonic) chords faster than unexpected (subdominant) chords (Bigand & Pineau, 1997). The Stroop effect, naming the color of a color-word slower when the color and the word conflict, has been shown to be related to the ability of maintaining task goals in the face of competition from habit (Cohen, Dunbar, & McClelland, 1990). In the current study, we hypothesized that individuals who perform better at the Stroop task would show reduced harmonic priming, since they would be better at inhibiting the effects of habitual expectancy that cause harmonic priming. The results were consistent with our hypothesis, in that, we observed positive correlation between harmonic priming and the Stroop effect ($r(60) = .30, p < .05$). Results were discussed in relation to the effects of attentional mechanisms on harmonic priming.