Sonrisa S. E Watts

•St. Kitts & Nevis, Basseterre, 00265 • sonrisawatts@encodedemotion.org • 869-661-1404 •
https://encodedemotion.org/

Education

UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES GLOBAL CAMPUS
Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) ,Psychology. GPA: 3.9/4.3 - First Class Honours
Awards: National Bursary Award: Academic Distinction , Distinction in Legal Analysis (CFBC, Year 2)
Research Interests: Emotion–Cognition Interaction; Metacognitive Dissonance; Human–AI Trust and Bias;
Explainable AI (XAI); Experimental and Computational Behavioral Science.

Research Experience

University of the West Indies
Research Study/ Practicum - Supervisor: Dr. Florence Seemungal
"Examining the Relationship between Faculty Support and Academic Self-Efficacy among Caribbean UWI
Global Campus Students"

January 2024–
March 2025

- Co-authored research paper and conducted a structured quantitative investigation with UWI students, applying Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory to examine the influence of faculty support on academic self-efficacy. Maintained methodological rigor through psychometrically validated instruments (Cronbach's $\alpha > .80$) under JASP multiple regression analysis.

Independent Research Initiative- Emotion Encoded
Founder & Principal Researcher

June 2025- Present
St.Kitts & Nevis

.

- Designed and led mixed-methods studies (N≈133+) investigating how emotional reasoning, heuristics, metacognition, and cognitive bias drive psychological resistance to Artificial Intelligence in high-stakes fields (medicine, law, finance). Findings from logistic regression modeling(Python, using pandas, matplotlib, seaborn) revealed agency bias, metacognitive dissonance & affective heuristics as dominant predictors of AI trust (OR=2.96, trend-level significance).
- Research findings were formally cited in a Ministry of Education national policy proposal on digital literacy and AI ethics, potentially impacting over 3,000 students.
  Secured $700 USD in initial microgrant funding to establish an AI Tools Micro-Grant Program, equipping entrepreneurs with ethical AI access and support.
- Conducted an extensive professional interview series (N≈30+), performing thematic and semantic analyses of experts, including a biomedical engineering professor of Johns Hopkins University, physicians in internal medicine, oncologist, founders of tele-health and behavioural science startups, educators, lawyers, psychologists, psychiatrists and technology specialists, to identify conditional acceptance, accountability ambiguity, and perceived threat to expertise as core cognitive-emotional barriers to professional AI adoption
- Preprint on PsyArXiv: Independent research paper, "The Cognitive Foundations of Algorithmic Trust: Human Reasoning in High-Stakes AI Systems," accepted and available on the psychology preprint server.

- Authored and published 30 + open-access briefs (e.g., "AI Therapists vs. Financial Advisors: Cognitive-Emotional Divides in Trust") on website fostering public literacy on decoding emotional barriers to AI adoption.

Research Consultant
UNDP Small Grants Programme Funded Initiative **Apiculture & Climate Adaptation Project**

St.Kitts & Nevis
October 2025

- Provided behavioral research consulting for a USD $74,000 UNDP-funded national apiculture initiative supporting climate resilience in rural farming communities.
- Pioneered conceptual frameworks and behavioural experiments to examine farmer engagement, sustainability mindsets, and adaptation behavior in small-island contexts.

Lead Researcher
Emotion Encoded & Mental Health Association of St. Kitts & Nevis

St.Kitts & Nevis
October 2025- Present

- Leading a national experimental and mixed-methods study investigating behavioural, cognitive, and systemic determinants of counselling uptake among 100+ healthcare providers.
- Secured institutional approval by pitching the study's methodology and implementation plan to the Association's board.
- Designed and validated psychometrically robust instruments examining decision-making, perceived barriers, and behavioural correlates of mental health referrals and applied behavioural economics and cost-effectiveness model evaluating insurer-funded counselling coverage within the St. Kitts National Insurance framework.
- Findings will be cited in a 2026 National Policy Brief to inform sustainable health financing and national strategic planning.

Research Volunteer
UNESCO National Commission & Department of Culture Project

St.Kitts & Nevis
August 2025 – Present

- Assisted in the comprehensive qualitative documentation and narrative synthesis for a UNESCO 10,000 USD funded Cultural heritage application project
- Conducted ethnographic fieldwork with 3 performance groups (N = 50+ masqueradars**)**, including participant observation and semi-structured interviews, transcription, thematic coding, authoring the final scholarly narrative and guiding multi-media teams to ensure factual, conceptual and ethical coherence across all written and visual documentation.

<u>PUBLICATIONS</u>

- **Watts, S. (2025, October).** *The Cognitive Foundations of Algorithmic Trust: Human Reasoning in High-Stakes AI Systems.* **[Preprint]. PsyArXiv, Center for Open Science.** **https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/jw36n_v2** **Accepted as an independent researcher based in St. Kitts and Nevis.**

   Watts, S. (2025). Poster and video presentation submitted for review at the ACM Conference on Intelligent User Interfaces (IUI 2026), Paphos, Cyprus.

Leadership and Activities

Eastern Caribbean Central Bank- Summer Generative AI & Python Camp
Peer Mentor & Volunteer Instructor

St.Kitts & Nevis
July *2025- August 2025*

- Designed an interactive Python "treasure-hunt" module
- Mentored 50 + youth in coding fundamentals, AI ethics, and algorithmic bias.

Emotion Encoded- AI Small Business Innovation Project
Founder & Project Lead

St.Kitts & Nevis
August 2025- Present

- Established and actively scaled outreach through partnerships with local innovation hubs and community organizations, institutionalizing inclusive innovation and advancing ethical AI literacy and human-centered practices among women and youth entrepreneurs in small enterprise development.

Skills & Interest

Research and Analytical Skills (Improving)
- Quantitative & Statistical Analysis: Logistic regression, multivariate analysis, experimental/survey design, psychometric scaling, inferential statistics. (JASP, SPSS)
- Data Science & Programming: Python (pandas, NumPy, matplotlib, seaborn, statsmodels), SQL, data cleaning, visualization, reproducible research workflows.
- Qualitative & Mixed Methods: Thematic & semantic analysis, grounded theory, interview coding, cross-method triangulation, integration of qualitative insights with statistical modeling.
- Research Design & Competencies: Hypothesis testing, model interpretation/validation, effect size estimation, reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha), data mapping/transformation.

Certifications (In Progress, 2025)

- Stanford Machine Learning (Andrew Ng, Coursera)
- IBM Data Science Professional Certificate