

Host 14.01.2025:
Department of Clinical Psychology
Friedrich-Schiller-University Jena



PSY-UP

Psychological PhD students &
Postdocs Share Yearly Updates

**ABSTRACT
BOOKLET**



PROGRAMME

- 12:30 PM – 1:00 PM: Arrival and poster setup
- 1:00 PM – 1:15 PM: Opening
- 1:15 PM – 2:15 PM: Talks (time slot #1)
- 2:15 PM – 2:30 PM: Short break
- 2:30 PM – 3:30 PM: Talks (time slot #2)
- 3:30 PM – 4:00 PM: Coffee & Cake break
- 4:00 PM – 5:15 PM: Talks (time slot #3)
- 5:15 PM – 5:30 PM: Short break
- 5:30 PM – 6:30 PM: Talks (time slot #4)
- 6:30 PM – 7:30 PM: Poster session with beer & pretzels



Time Slot 1: Talks

1:15 PM – 2:15 PM

Individual and Contextual Effects on Right-Wing Authoritarianism and Prejudice

Abstract

Right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) predicts various prejudices and ethnocentrism. Psychological research usually treats RWA as a stable individual-difference variable that reflects variations in psychological constitution, which drives prejudice and political orientation. Although extensive research indicates that RWA is highly context dependent, explanations for an individual's higher (vs. lower) RWA usually focus on intra-individual variables (e.g., personality), while contextual effects on RWA tend to be neglected. As a result, prejudice has also been treated as a matter of individual RWA. We address this gap using longitudinal multilevel modeling to investigate the role of individual and contextual factors as predictors of individual levels of RWA and prejudice. We analyzed data from four waves of the *Panel zur Wahrnehmung von Kriminalität und Straftäter:innen* (PaWakS, N = 1134) and the *Politbarometer 2022*. At the individual level, we included individual RWA at t as a predictor of the individual RWA and prejudice at $t+1$. At the contextual level, we included the ratio of right-wing party votes in a region as an indicator of the regional right-wing climate to predict individual RWA and prejudice of people living in that region. Results show a high intra-individual stability of RWA across all four waves. Second, we find that the contextual prevalence of right-wing attitudes (i.e., right-wing attitudes constitute a local descriptive norm) predicts individual RWA at $t+1$, suggesting that individual RWA is also shaped by the socio-political context. Third, the socio-political context also predicts individual prejudice. We discuss downstream implications of these findings for prejudice and authoritarianism research.

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Kinship perception in human voices: ratings of trust, dominance and familiarity in morphed voices at various levels of self-similarity

Abstract

Kinship is one of the crucial elements of human interaction, along with other social information such as identity, emotion, age, gender and personality traits. Kinship recognition helps us understand others better, establish self-identity in the community, and develop cooperative attitudes. In the present study, we investigated how people perceive self-similarity in voices as a potential cue of kinship, by using parameter-specific voice morphing. Voice recordings of 28 participants were paired with reference voices of four sex-matched speakers for the stimulus preparation. The voice pairs were morphed on the basis of either full morphs, F0 morphs, or timbre morphs at the level of 20, 40, 60, or 80 of the participant's own voice. During the experiment, participants were asked to rate these voices in terms of familiarity, trustworthiness and dominance. The results revealed that stimuli with a higher proportion of participants' own voice led to increased ratings of familiarity and trustworthiness, indicating that the participants processed self-similarity in voices as showed positive attitude towards self-similar speakers. Furthermore, we found that both F0 and timbre information contributed substantially to these familiarity and trustworthiness ratings. By comparison, findings were less clear for dominance ratings, with a trend for F0 - but not timbre - to affect dominance ratings. Overall, these findings provide empirical evidence for the perception of self-similarity in human voices and its impact on trait evaluations.

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If I Ask, Will You Tell Me? Associations Between Perspective Seeking and Social Sharing of Emotion

Abstract

Models of relationship development (e.g., Reis and Shaver, 1988) emphasize the importance of responders' reactions to the speakers' self-disclosures in prompting further disclosure. Perspective seeking (e.g., asking questions for clarification or elaboration) is one example of responsive behavior that may elicit further self-disclosure. One way of self-disclosure entails the social sharing of emotion (SSE; i.e., the verbal disclosure of one's inner states), which has been shown to support relationship building. This study focuses on links between perspective seeking and SSE over time to approximate inferences about causal directions. We hypothesized that responders' perspective seeking predicts speakers' SSE over time. To test this hypothesis, we analyzed videos ($n = 104$) of dyadic conversations about emotional events among previously unacquainted women. Independent coders rated the extent of perspective seeking ($ICC = .88$; 10 coders) and the extent of SSE ($ICC = .83$; 20 coders) during six time intervals of the conversations. Unexpectedly, results showed that greater perspective seeking by the responders was associated with less SSE by the speakers at the same measurement time point. This effect was not robust when controlling for previous perspective seeking and SSE. Previous perspective seeking was unrelated to later SSE. Exploratory analyses revealed that asking more questions that did not focus on the speaker's inner states was consistently associated with the speakers showing less SSE at the same time point. From this, we conclude that speakers' SSE seems to depend on the questions responders ask. However, different questions may be appropriate in different social situations.

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REALISE – Recognize mental health issues early

Abstract

Background:

Approximately 75% of mental health conditions manifest before age 25, with a high incidence of depression and anxiety disorders occurring between ages 15 and 30. University years, therefore, represent a critical period for students' mental health. To address this, we initiated the REALISE project at Friedrich Schiller University Jena.

Objectives:

REALISE aims to support early identification of mental health issues by helping students monitor their mental well-being. We achieve this by conducting regular mental health assessments and providing personalized feedback via an online portal, where students receive tailored information about their mental health and general resources. Collected data enable us to track mental health trends over time, identify predictors, and recognize at-risk groups. In the long term, REALISE will inform selective and indicated prevention strategies to enhance student mental health resources at the university.

Study Design:

REALISE is a prospective online cohort study launched in October 2023, with 2000 students from various faculties already enrolled. Each semester, new students are recruited. The initial survey gathers sociodemographic data, current psychological distress, and potential predictors. Psychological distress is measured using the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS-21). Predictors include assessments of personality (BIFA-10), social connectedness (GBS), resilience (RS-13), personality functioning (LPFS-BF), empathy (SPF), emotion regulation (SREIS), self-esteem (B-RESES), and life experiences (BIFA, CTS). After the baseline survey, monthly follow-ups track students' mental health. Initial findings will be presented at the conference.

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Validation of the new diversity beliefs scale “age-based hierarchy beliefs”

Abstract

Objective: This study aimed to develop and validate a new scale—“age-based hierarchy beliefs”—to assess how beliefs about age and hierarchy influence team members' willingness to cooperate across age and hierarchy differences, and their perspectives on leadership and responsibility within teams. Grounded in social identity theory and team dynamics research, the scale addresses a gap in tools for measuring diversity beliefs related to age and hierarchy.

Methods: The reliability and validity of the new scale were examined in a sample of 321 working adults. The questionnaire included the new scale with three subscales: (1) age, (2) hierarchy, and (3) age-hierarchy beliefs, each initially containing six items, and four other established diversity scales. Both exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were conducted to validate the scale.

Results: The factor analysis indicated that three of the six original items developed for each subscale loaded significantly onto their respective factors. Consequently, each subscale was shortened to three items. The three subscales showed a positive correlation and demonstrated good reliability, as well as good convergent and discriminant validity.

Conclusions: This study successfully validated a new scale “age-based hierarchy beliefs” for diversity research focused on age and hierarchy beliefs. High scores on the age-hierarchy subscale indicate a preference for working with colleagues of similar or higher age and a belief that leadership should align with seniority in age and hierarchy. Future studies are planned to further refine the scale and test its applicability across various organizational settings.

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Time Slot 2: Talks

2:30 PM – 3:30 PM



Salient threat to personal control as a reinforcer of conformity to radical climate protest norms

Abstract

The threatening climate crisis is motivating (especially young) people to take collective action, including radical climate protest (e.g., blocking roads; Buzogány & Scherhauser, 2023). From a social psychological perspective, acting collectively in line with the norms of one's group could be an attempt to cope with feelings of threat. Group-based control theory (Fritzsche, 2022) proposes that conformity to salient ingroup norms is a means to restore a sense of control through one's social identity as a group member, particularly when one's sense of personal control is deprived. By increasing ingroup norm conformity, salient threat to personal control could even motivate support of radicalism if radicalism is normative for one's ingroup (Barth et al., 2018). In our current experiment with a 2×2 design, we tested this assumption in the context of radical climate protest in Germany ("When will we join the road blockade?"; Hess et al., 2024). $N = 652$ young participants (16–28 years old) were either presented with the information that the clear majority of the young generation agrees (vs. does not agree) with radical climate protest (i.e., manipulated salience of pro-radical vs. non-radical ingroup norms). Accordingly, the salience of (supposed) pro- (vs. non-)radical ingroup norms increased participants' support of radical climate protest. Contrary to our hypothesis, however, salient threat to personal control (vs. no threat salient) did *not* increase conformity for the whole sample, but only for those who considered climate protection to be the "top priority," indicating deterrent effects of ingroup radicalism among those less committed.

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In Synch and Sensitive - Are There Links Between Interpersonal Motor Following and Empathic Accuracy?

Abstract

Empathic accuracy, the ability to correctly infer other persons' mental states, is central to psychosocial adjustment across the lifespan. Hence, it is crucial to identify the mechanisms underlying this phenomenon. As empathic accuracy is rooted in social exchange processes, we aimed to investigate the role of motor following (i.e., aligning one's body movements with those of another person) as a nonverbal indicator of interpersonal coordination. Based on theoretical assumptions and empirical evidence, we propose that motor following contributes to higher levels of empathic understanding by increasing the empathizers' (the person making inferences) attentional focus on the target (the person whose thoughts and feelings are inferred) and by fostering a self-other representational overlap. Thus, we hypothesized that, for the empathizers, more frequent motor following is associated with enhanced empathic accuracy. Analyses were based upon $N = 104$ videos of dyadic conversations among unacquainted younger (20-31 years) and older women (69-80 years). Body motions were measured with motion energy analyses.

Dyadic movement features, such as the frequency of motor following, were quantified with the algorithms by Altmann (2013). Empathic accuracy was operationalized as the agreement between targets' self-reported and empathizers' other-reported feelings at multiple time points throughout the conversation. Contrary to our expectations, motor following did not predict empathic accuracy.

Instead, we found a negative association between accuracy and individual movement frequency. We discuss whether increased motor activity indicates distractibility, which may interfere with the other-focused attention required for accurate judgments.

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Cultural Differences in Dog Human Interactions

Abstract

Dogs show an extraordinary capacity to understand, communicate, and cooperate with humans. However, what we know about the social-cognitive skills of dogs comes from observations and experiments performed in western ("WEIRD") societies. Around the world though, dogs are kept for various functions, they are perceived and treated differently, suggesting cross-cultural diversity in the strength of dog-human relationships. In our project about Cultural Differences in Dog Human Interactions we take to distinctive approaches to address this issue, hypothesizing that dog-human relationships will be closer in societies where dog functions require intense cooperation between dogs and humans.

In this huge project, we investigated how dogs' cognitive skills and dog-human interactions vary cross-culturally comparing dog-owner interactions in Germany and in four non-WEIRD cultures in four continents: Vanuatu, Mongolia, Madagascar and Peru. We developed a test battery with seven short tests on the following aspects of dog-owner interaction: education, communication, visual perspective-taking, social referencing and physical cognition. We also presented owners a questionnaire about their relationship with their dog. The results show striking similarities and differences between the dog human relationship in Germany and non-WEIRD societies. The findings of this project do not only contribute to a better understanding of the dog-human relationship, but also of the relationship between cultural evolution and domestication, i.e. how cultural and evolutionary processes influence each other.

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“I feel your worry” - Climate Emotions and Distress in Families

Abstract

Objective: Many young people feel a variety of emotions in relation to the climate crisis, with some even reporting climate distress. Parents and caretakers likely shape how children and adolescents experience the climate crisis. In our study, we investigated the effects of parent and child climate emotions on climate distress, mediated by emotion socialization as well as the role of child age. Method: We conducted an online survey with N = 121 German parents of children aged 6 to 17, measuring sociodemographic variables, parent and child climate emotions (sadness, anger, and fear), climate distress, and parental emotion socialization of child climate emotions. We used an Actor Partner Interdependence Mediation model to examine effects of these variables. Results: Climate emotions and climate distress were positively correlated between parents and children. In both parents and children, climate emotions predicted climate distress. In parents, this effect was mediated by emotion dismissing, i.e. invalidating responses to their child's expression of climate emotions. Child age was positively related to child climate emotions, but negatively related to parent climate emotions and distress. Discussion: These results highlight the importance of studying child and adolescent climate emotions in their social context by considering the role of parents and caregivers.

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Globaler Wandel in der Psychotherapie: Einflüsse aktueller gesellschaftlicher Veränderungen auf psychische Gesundheit und Therapie

Abstract

Globaler Wandel wirkt sich in vielfältiger Weise sowohl auf individuelle Lebenssituationen als auch auf das gesellschaftliche Zusammenleben aus. Auswirkungen von gesellschaftlichen Ereignissen auf psychische Erkrankungen und Psychotherapie werden von der Psychotherapieforschung jedoch nur in einzelnen Bereichen erfasst und einbezogen. Ziel der vorliegenden Untersuchung ist es, aktuelle Problemlagen und Anliegen von Patient*innen in Deutschland anhand von Erfahrungsberichten aus der Praxis zu explorieren, mögliche gesellschaftliche Ursachen zu sammeln und Überlegungen zum therapeutischen Umgang zu bündeln. Hierfür wurden Psychotherapeut*innen (n = 10) und Psychotherapiepatient*innen (n = 12) in qualitativen Interviews befragt und diese mithilfe der Grounded Theory ausgewertet. Nach Auswertung der gesammelten Perspektiven konnten fünf wesentliche Auswirkungen aktueller gesellschaftlicher Ereignisse und Globalisierungsfolgen identifiziert werden. Diese umfassen aus Perspektive von Psychotherapeut*innen und Patient*innen zunehmende Zukunftsängste, abnehmende soziale Eingebundenheit, vermehrte Ziel- und Identitätsfragen als Anliegen für die Psychotherapie, vermehrte psychische Belastung in Folge politischer Differenzen und eine erhöhte Nachfrage nach diversitätssensibler Psychotherapie. Therapeutische Ansätze umfassen neben der Erweiterung von Handlungsspielräumen vor allem das zur Verfügung stellen von Kontakt, Begleitung, Orientierung, emotionaler Unterstützung und Bindungserfahrung. Der Einbezug von Wissen von Psychotherapeut*innen und Patient*innen sowie Befunden aus gesellschaftswissenschaftlichen Disziplinen kann hilfreich sein, aktuelle Problemlagen zu verstehen und neue therapeutische Methoden zu entwickeln oder bereits bestehende zu sammeln, zu verknüpfen und gezielt einzusetzen.

Kleinschmitt, A., Mohrmüller, M., & Beelmann, A. (2024). Globaler Wandel in der Psychotherapie: Einflüsse aktueller gesellschaftlicher Veränderungen auf psychische Gesundheit und Therapie. *PPmP-Psychotherapie · Psychosomatik · Medizinische Psychologie*.

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Time Slot 3: Talks

4:00 PM – 5:15 PM



Affect-health coupling from adolescence to old age: Evidence from a longitudinal experience sampling study

Abstract

While there is consensus that physical and emotional well-being are related, divergent claims have been made about possible age-related differences. This study aimed to investigate potential age-related differences in concurrent and prospective associations between everyday affective experiences and individuals' health and physical well-being. We used two waves of measurement burst data (wave 1: $N = 398$, 12 – 90 years; wave 2: $N = 365$, 14 – 88 years; inter-wave interval: $M = 2.53$ years). Per wave, participants provided 54 experience samples of their momentary affective and physical well-being. In addition, several person-level health indicators were assessed, including subjective health as well as number and severity of health conditions and complaints. Overall, results point to an age-related increase in affect- health coupling: The older participants were, the more strongly were health problems associated with lower concurrent affective well-being. Age moderations also emerged for prospective affect-health links, both across shorter (hours) and longer time intervals (years). Dynamical structural equation modeling showed an age-related increase in cross-lagged associations between individuals' time series of momentary emotional and physical well-being, assessed while participants pursued their normal daily routines. Similarly, moderated cross-lagged panel models yielded age-related increases in cross-lagged associations between everyday emotional well-being and indicators of physical health, assessed 2.5 years apart. Such age moderations emerged in both directions of cross-lagged associations (i.e., affect predicting later health, and health predicting later affect). This suggests that both the affective relevance of health impairments and the health- protective role of daily affective experiences may become more pronounced with advancing age.

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Affective Touch in Romantic Relationships

Abstract

Partner touch is a central component of romantic relationships. Studies have emphasized its role in dyadic stress reduction and relationship quality. However, basic information about partner touch is still lacking. Surprisingly, we do not know exactly how often partners tend to touch each other, and how this depends on life circumstances, relationship characteristics, or psychological features. Previous studies on this topic are limited by unrepresentative or small samples and vague semantic measures. The German Family Demographic Panel Study (FReDA; Bujard et al., 2023; Schneider et al. 2021) gave us the unique opportunity to examine epidemiological touch data of more than 16,000 individuals in a relationship. For the first time, FReDA included questions about hugging, holding, and kissing. We analyzed descriptive touch patterns and multivariate associations. Results reveal that most individuals kissed with their partner 21 to 50 times per week and hugged and held them 1 to 5 times per week. The reported touch patterns were not independent from other influences. With respect to timing, individuals in newly established relationships reported more partner touch. Couples with children reported less partner touch. Personality traits also played a role: More touch was reported by more extraverted, agreeable, and open individuals. Regarding well-being, individuals with more partner touch were more satisfied with their relationship and felt less lonely. These findings highlight the importance of affective touch for romantic relationships and deepen our understanding of possible determinants and correlates of touch behaviors.

Authors and affiliations

Yvonne Friedrich (*presenting*)

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Assessing Social and Health-Related Processes in Panel Studies through Event-Contingent Multimethod Experience Sampling (SHERPA-Project)

Abstract

Social interactions play a vital role in shaping human life and can have profound effects on individuals' health. Recent studies have emphasized the importance of social relationships in emerging adulthood. Specifically, the transition from adolescence to adulthood is characterized by unique social developmental demands. In our project, we examine the associations between social interactions in young adults and their physical and mental health.

The SHERPA project has three main objectives:

To what extent are social interactions beneficial for mental and physical health in emerging and young adults?

What is the effectiveness of two sampling schemes, namely, event-contingent and signal-contingent sampling, and what are the advantages of each?

How can we analyze the complex dynamics within the data? For this purpose, we will develop appropriate statistical methods for event-contingent, multimethod experience sampling designs. In this talk, we provide initial insights into the newly launched SHERPA project, which is part of the DFG infrastructure priority program (SP2431). In the project, we assess the dynamics of social interactions using Bluetooth technology to track the closeness of a social interaction partner in real time and real-life contexts. We will present the current state of the project, including its pilot study, and discuss challenges and progress within the research process.

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Do I sound odd to you? – Perceived naturalness in voices

Abstract

When we hear a voice, we form an instant impression about it. Perceived naturalness of voices is a prominent property within these impressions – and one which affects social interactions, both in a purely human context and in scenarios with human and artificial agents. For example, evidence from speech-language pathologies shows that impairments in speech naturalness affect everyday interaction, potentially resulting in social isolation, reduced quality of life, and even depression. Likewise, although recent years have seen rapid developments in the effort to create synthetic voices that resemble human vocal expression, they are consistently rated as less natural than human ones, compromising their acceptability for a range of applications. Given this widespread practical importance, voice naturalness is a concept that deserves thorough empirical investigation. However, in the scientific literature, it currently lacks consistent definition and terminology, which in turn impedes informative and interdisciplinary research efforts. To address this problem, we developed the first concise framework for the conceptualization of voice naturalness. With a taxonomy comprised of two distinct types, namely deviation-based naturalness and human-likeness-based naturalness, we provide a flexible and intuitive reference frame that is applicable across diverse empirical designs, while at the same time promoting comparability across research domains. This way, we hope to pave the way for empirical progress that will lead to a more systematic understanding of voice naturalness, and its impact on everyday communication and interaction.

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How do we balance pathogen avoidance and caregiving responses during health-crises: Empirical evidence for a dual process model of pathogen management and intergroup Relations

Abstract

Objective: This research investigates how pathogen threats impact intergroup relations, addressing long-standing debates regarding the Behavioral Immune System (BIS) theory and its role in shaping social behaviours during health crises. While this theory emphasises pathogen avoidance and exclusionary responses, questions remain about whether pathogen threats exclusively foster prejudice or if affiliative responses may also arise. We apply our novel Dual Process Model (DPM) of pathogen management to examine both the Direct Differential Impact (DDI) and Emotion-Mediated Impact (EMI) hypotheses, which respectively propose that pathogen threats promote variable intergroup outcomes and that emotional pathways (aversive or affiliative) clarify these conflicting effects.

Methods: Using data from 18 surveys (N = 115,824) conducted in Germany and the US during the COVID-19 pandemic, we conducted five studies testing the relationship between pathogen sensitivity and a range of intergroup outcomes.

Mediation analyses tested whether aversive emotions (e.g., fear) or affiliative emotions (e.g., empathy) clarify the variability in these associations.

Results: Supporting the DDI hypothesis, pathogen threat showed mixed direct associations with intergroup outcomes (negative, positive, and null). Mediation supported the EMI hypothesis, revealing that fear mediated negative intergroup responses (e.g., prejudice, xenophobia), while empathy fostered positive attitudes (e.g., support for immigration, social welfare).

Discussion: By integrating both avoidance and affiliative pathways, the DPM extends the BIS theory. These findings demonstrate that pathogen-induced emotions can foster both division and cohesion, depending on the prevailing emotional responses. This research expands the understanding of pathogen-related social dynamics, offering implications for policies aimed at promoting positive attitudes during pandemics.

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Time Slot 4: Talks

5:30 PM – 6:30 PM

Compassing the illusion: motion-induced blindness shows spatial anisotropies in conscious perception

Abstract

Polar angle asymmetries (PAAs), the differences in perceptual experiences and performance across different regions of the visual field are present in various paradigms and tasks of visual perception. Currently, research in this area is sparse, particularly regarding the influence of PAAs during perceptual illusions, highlighting a gap in visual cognition studies. We aim to fill this gap by measuring PAAs across the visual field during an illusion applied to test conscious vision widely. Motion-induced blindness (MIB) is an illusion when a peripheral target disappears from consciousness as the result of a continuously moving background pattern. During MIB, we separately measured the average disappearance time of peripheral targets in eight equidistant visual field positions. Our results indicate a significant variation in MIB disappearance times and frequencies as a function of target location. Specifically, we found shorter and fewer disappearances along the cardinal compared to oblique directions and along the horizontal compared to the vertical meridian. Our results suggest specific consistencies between visual field asymmetries and conscious visual perception.

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Does the maturity principle hold for social, emotional, and behavioral skills?

Abstract

Social, emotional, and behavioral (SEB) skills, defined as capacities for specific behaviors in critical situations, are of interest across various disciplines. Traditionally assessed using personality questionnaires, the BESSI framework introduces a different approach by asking respondents how well they can perform an activity rather than the extent to which they agree with statements about themselves (e.g., *I am ..*). The framework distinguishes five broad skill domains: Self-Management, Social Engagement, Cooperation, Emotional Resilience, and Innovation. An open research question is whether SEB skills follow the recently criticized maturational trend observed in the Big Five traits, given their overlap.

This study examined whether the maturity principle applies to SEB skills by exploring age differences in a representative sample of $N = 940$ adults from Germany (age range: 18–65, $M = 43$, $SD = 14$, 50% female) using moderated non-linear factor analysis models. Additionally, it investigated age-related relationships between SEB skills and life quality.

Results revealed no age invariance across all five skill domains and 18 of 32 facets, raising questions about the age-fairness of the skills inventory. Surprisingly, no systematic age differences in SEB skills were found that mirrored the expected maturational trend observed in personality traits. These findings challenge the maturity principle and emphasize the need for context-specific analyses of individual skills.

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Understanding the Temporal Dynamics of Online (Mis)information: Insights from Longitudinal Social Data

Abstract

Online misinformation has a substantial impact on our information ecosystem and influences individual decision-making. While much research has focused on the static traits of misinformation, its long-term emotional evolution remains less explored. In this talk, I present data from around two million tweets on Twitter (now "X"), spanning 366 fact-checked stories, showing that misinformation consistently triggers more negative emotions—particularly disgust and anger—than true information, with positive emotions notably diminished. Over time, misinformation becomes progressively more negative, a pattern not observed with true information. These emotional shifts appear independently of changes in narrative content. This work underscores the importance of examining the temporal dynamics of (mis)information, providing insights that could help support a more resilient information ecosystem and encourage future studies on source credibility, cross-platform behaviors, and psychological influences.

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Study Protocol: Investigating Dynamic Belief Updating in Children and Adolescents with Anxiety Disorders

Abstract

Making inferences and predictions in uncertain environments is key to human learning, particularly in threatening contexts. Dynamic belief updating (DynBU) involves forming and adapting internal belief models about environmental states in response to systematic changes. Patients with mental disorders often show dysfunctional or negatively biased learning. Anxiety disorders, for instance, are marked by aberrant emotional-associative learning, heightened fear generalization. Childhood and adolescence are critical periods for anxiety disorder development, raising questions about statistical learning during both normative and pathological development. Despite its potential to reveal mechanisms underlying the onset, maintenance, and treatment of these disorders, research on statistical learning in anxiety disorders remains limited.

Our project investigates DynBU alterations in children and adolescents with clinical anxiety disorders. We hypothesize that the anxiety group will show overlearning of expected uncertainty, reflecting heightened sensitivity to environmental changes. To test this, we will recruit participants aged 10–17 ($n = 64$), including clinical and healthy controls, and a pilot sample of healthy children aged 8–9 ($n = 25$). Two behavioral tasks will be employed: the “confetti cannon task,” examining DynBU with pupillometry, and the “predator task,” a gamified predictive inference task assessing defensive reactions in threatening contexts. Participants will also undergo comprehensive clinical assessments.

In conclusion, this study aims to uncover developmental differences and alterations in DynBU in youth with clinical anxiety disorders. As part of a DFG research unit, we closely collaborate with our partner labs in Berlin, investigating adults with the same protocol and MRI, ensuring a lifespan perspective.

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Poster Session

6:30PM – 7:30 PM

Is heart rate synchronization related to empathic processes?

Abstract

Empathic accuracy refers to how precisely one person can assess another's thoughts and feelings. Biopsychological synchronization, such as heart rate synchronization, may enhance this ability, potentially leading to greater empathic accuracy. This study examined the relationship between heart rate synchronization and empathic accuracy in a sample of 48 all-female dyads, including both younger women (aged 24-36) and older women (aged 74-84). Participants were randomly paired and took turns sharing emotionally significant experiences, while their partners listened, responded, or asked questions, as they would in everyday conversation. The conversations were videotaped, and both participants' heart rates were continuously measured. After the conversation, each participant reviewed the video twice, reporting their own emotions and what they believed their partner was feeling at several fixed time points. Heart rate synchronization was calculated, and empathic accuracy was operationalized as the degree of agreement between self-reported and perceived emotions. This study is one of the first to investigate heart rate synchronization as a physiological mechanism of empathic accuracy, using a novel methodological approach that offers new insights into the biopsychological foundations of empathy. A multilevel analysis revealed that heart rate synchronization significantly predicted empathic accuracy, following a quadratic relationship. Interestingly, the findings suggest that weak heart rate asynchrony may predict the highest empathic accuracy, an area that warrants further investigation. The implications of these findings are discussed.

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Designing a Scale for Ideological Bias Expression

Abstract

In the complex realm of socio-scientific challenges, robust scientific evidence often contends with fervent political convictions, posing a considerable obstacle to effective science communication. Ideological bias, the selective interpretation of scientific evidence through political beliefs, creates a scenario where misinformation gains acceptance if it aligns with ideological convictions, while conflicting scientific findings are likely to be rejected.

We present an iterative development and evaluation process for an instrument measuring Ideological Bias Expression (IBE). IBE, defined as the manifestation of political-ideological beliefs shaping the evaluation of socio-scientific facts, was assessed through a preliminary questionnaire requiring participants to provide quantitative estimates on ideologically polarized subjects like climate change and domestic security. The consistent over- or underestimation of evidence-based facts represented the degree of individual ideological bias across the ideological spectrum. Building on challenges from this initial development and citizen science feedback, we outline the iterative refinement of IBE. The new measure incorporates categorical answer formats, suitable for the use in both adult and student samples. The IBE displays good psychometric properties and effectively differentiates biased fact evaluations across the ideological spectrum. Implications for using the measure in feedback and interventions to foster a more open evaluation of facts are discussed.

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Democracy in Decline? – Measuring Populist Attitudes in Adolescence and Young Adults

Abstract

Objective

Global crises and rising support for populist parties challenge the promotion of democratic citizenship. While research has focused on adult populism, little is known about its manifestation among youth. This study addresses this gap by adapting a populism scale for adolescents and exploring its structure and validity.

Method

Using a sample of 14–21-year-olds ($N = 478$), we applied a youth-adapted version of Castanho Silva et al.'s (2018) populism scale, assessing anti-elitism, people-centrism, and Manichaeian outlook. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and bifactor modeling evaluated the scale's structure. Structural equation modeling (SEM) tested associations with related constructs (e.g., authoritarianism, conspiracy mentality, political distrust), while regression analysis explored voting preferences.

Results

CFA supported a three-dimensional structure of populist attitudes, with acceptable reliability ($\omega = .72$). Measurement invariance was confirmed across adolescents (14–18 years) and young adults (19–21 years). SEM established the general factor's associations with attitudinal correlates such as conspiracy mentality, satisfaction with democracy, and political trust. Regression analyses revealed links between populist attitudes and voting preferences..

Discussion

The findings highlight the bifactor model as a valuable tool for measuring populism, providing nuanced insights into its multidimensional nature and overarching structure. By establishing a measurement model, this study lays the groundwork for future longitudinal research, advancing our understanding of populist attitudes in Youth and their development.

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The collective nature of prejudice – Normativity in group attitudes

Abstract

Social psychological research on prejudice usually searches for psychological differences between individuals that explain prejudice in order to identify their antecedents and to change prejudice effectively. Whilst this approach inspired a plethora of theories, it neglects the strong communalities in individuals regarding their prejudices. As early as 1948 Sherif argued that individuals within societies agree on a hierarchy of social groups, in which some groups are rated better or worse than others. The present work presents an approach to investigate such a hierarchy of prejudices and tests individual (e.g., RWA) and collective explanations (e.g., social norms) of prejudice against each other. In two correlational studies using a stimulus sampling approach, we show that prejudices against a broad array of social groups are strongly predicted by injunctive and descriptive norms. We furthermore provide evidence that the correlations can be understood as an expression of shared prejudices between participants rather than the outcomes of individual differences. These findings present a starting point to investigate processes explaining the emergence, maintenance and, change of social norms in regards to prejudice. We discuss theoretical and practical implications of a normative understanding of prejudice and present an outlook on future research to overcome shortcomings of a focus on individual differences.

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Entwicklung und Evaluation eines wertebasierten Dopingpräventionsprogramms im Nachwuchsleistungssport

Abstract

Einleitung

Um Doping zu minimieren ist der Einsatz von evaluierten Dopingpräventionsprogrammen im Nachwuchsleistungssport von höchster Bedeutung. Nachdem Maßnahmen, die sich auf eine Informationsvermittlung zum Thema Doping beschränken, nicht auszureichen scheinen, um Dopingabsichten und -verhalten zu verringern (Backhouse, 2015), gewann zunehmend ein wertebasierter Ansatz an Bedeutung. Hierbei werden Emotionen, Werte und moralische Kompetenzen fokussiert. Die aktuelle Forschung unterstreicht, dass die am stärksten mit Dopingabsichten verbundenen Variablen von moralischer Natur sind und demnach Faktoren wie moral disengagement (MD), antizipierte Schuld (AS), Empathie sowie kollektiv-moralische Normen vielversprechende Zielkonstrukte in Präventionsmaßnahmen darstellen (vgl. Ntoumanis et al., 2014).

Methode

Basierend auf den empirischen Befunden wurde ein wertebasiertes (WB) Dopingpräventionsprogramm (sechs 45-minütige Einheiten) für jugendliche Athlet:innen entwickelt, das auf die Veränderung der oben genannten Variablen abzielte.

Innerhalb eines cluster-randomisierten kontrollierten Studiendesigns wurden 30 Trainingsgruppen bzw. Schulklassen ($N = 321$, $M_{\text{Alter}} = 15.4$ Jahre) drei verschiedenen Bedingungen zugeteilt (WB Interventionsgruppe, informationsbasierte Interventionsgruppe, Wartekontrollgruppe) und zu drei verschiedenen Zeitpunkten befragt: Prätest, Posttest und 3 bis 4- monatiges Follow Up.

Ergebnisse

Mehrebenenanalysen zeigten, dass die WB Interventionsgruppe zum Posttest im Vergleich zur Wartekontrollgruppe reduziertes MD und gesteigerte AS aufwies. Follow Up-Analysen bestätigten einen nachhaltigen Effekt für MD, nicht aber für AS. Darüber hinaus wurde ein "verzögerter" Effekt für gesteigerte Empathie festgestellt.

Diskussion

Obwohl nicht in allen Variablen Veränderungen bewirkt wurden, unterstützt diese Studie den potentiellen Nutzen von wertebasierten Elementen z.B. in Ergänzung zu informationsvermittelnden Ansätzen in der Dopingprävention.

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Perfect Match – Understanding Personality-based Compatibility in Dog- Owner Dyads

Abstract

Objective: The compatibility (i.e., the best match) of a dog and its owner based on their personalities is a promising criterion for evaluating the functionality of their relationship, especially in working dog dyads. This study is the first to investigate this compatibility by testing 92 dog-human teams, including guide dogs for the blind and police dogs.

Methods: The personality of both partners was assessed, as well as various relationship parameters, their performance (i.e., speed and accuracy) as a team in an obstacle course, and their performance in a showing paradigm (i.e., speed and accuracy).

Results: We found that relationship satisfaction was highest when humans and dogs both scored low on openness or agreeableness. These results support the hypothesis that compatibility is reached via corresponding (i.e., same) traits. However, teams comprising highly agreeable dogs and humans performed poorly in the two behavioural tasks. Performance was highest in teams with dogs that were more open, neurotic, and extraverted.

Discussion: While some interaction effects may still be undetected, these results can already contribute to the understanding of a functional dog-human relationship and can potentially inform suitable assignment of dogs to owners, thereby preventing the returning of (working-) dogs.

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The assessment of crisis intervention for patients from the employees' perspective: A case study of the University Hospital Jena

Abstract

Objective:

This study retrospectively evaluates the effectiveness of the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT), which provides support to patients in crisis at University Hospital Jena (2022–2023), with a focus on intervention quality and its impact on staff stress to guide quality management.

Method:

A two-step approach was used. A quantitative survey assessed CIT quality in three areas: interdisciplinary collaboration, reasons for intervention, and reported stress perception, using the "Perceived Work Characteristics Survey" subscales for stress and self-developed questions for other areas. Moderators included supervisor support, age, and experience. 48 CIT-requesters and 22 Non-requesters participated. Stress level differences were analyzed using t-tests. Moderation analysis was performed with linear regression. Gaps were explored through two focus groups (doctors and nurses).

Results:

Overall, collaboration with the CIT was positively evaluated. While no significant overall stress score differences were found, the CIT-requesters reported clearer role definitions. The Non-requesters experienced higher stress when supervisor support was low. Focus groups revealed differences in the reasons for the stress relief provided by the CIT between professions. Key challenges included limited availability and unclear responsibilities, which led to withheld requests and suggestions for improvements, such as 24/7 availability.

Discussion:

The findings highlight the potential of psychosocial support structures to alleviate stress of hospital staff, while emphasizing the crucial role of factors like supervisor support. One of the main challenges is the need for the CIT not only to operate within its limited hours but also to adapt to the diverse needs of different professional groups, ensuring maximum helpfulness.

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Prävention in der Schule – relevante Umsetzungsfaktoren am Beispiel des IPSY-Programms

Abstract

Das Angebot nachweislich wirksamer schulbasierter Präventionsprogramme ist groß, ihr Transfer in den schulischen Alltag jedoch oftmals beschwerlich. Befunde, die Rückschlüsse auf förderliche oder hinderliche Implementierungsfaktoren ermöglichen, sind v.a. im deutschen Kontext limitiert. Um das Wissen diesbezüglich zu erweitern, wurde im Rahmen der bundesweiten Verbreitung des Lebenskompetenzenprogramm IPSY untersucht, welche individuellen und institutionellen Faktoren, die Umsetzung in den schulischen Kontext begünstigen oder erschweren. Zwischen 2019 und 2023 nahmen mehr als 200 pädagogische Fachkräfte weiterführender Schulen mit den Klassenstufen 5 bis 7 aus vier Bundesländern an einer Fragebogenstudie mit mehreren Erhebungszeitpunkten (unmittelbar vor, nach sowie im Durchschnitt 18 Monate nach einer IPSY-Schulung) teil.

Erste Analysen weisen auf zahlreiche fördernde und hemmende individuelle sowie institutionelle Faktoren hin, wie z. B. die persönliche Einstellung zu Präventionsprogrammen, die individuelle Umsetzungszuversicht, zeitliche und personelle Ressourcen der Schule, das Interesse und Engagement des Kollegiums bzw. der Schulleitung wie auch das vorhandene Schulcurriculum. Von diesen Studienbefunden ausgehend, werden Gelingensbedingungen und Strategien zur Unterstützung der Implementierung effektiver Präventionsprogramme abgeleitet und diskutiert.

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Digital interventions to promote Mental Health Literacy in people with mental health problems across the lifespan: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis

Abstract

Background: Mental health literacy (MHL) encompasses knowledge, attitudes and the ability to understand and promote mental health and to seek help when needed. Improvement in MHL is associated with improved self-management and a better ability to establish and maintain psychological well-being. Digital interventions (DIs) have been shown to be effective in promoting MHL and have benefits such as timely and location-independent support. Given the growing availability of DIs, assessing their effectiveness and feasibility with regard to the respective target group is crucial.

Research question: This review aims to identify DI components that promote MHL across different age groups, characterize their usage patterns, and assess their effectiveness.

Methods: A systematic literature search was conducted in PubMed, PsycINFO, Web of Knowledge, and Scopus, screening 5321 studies. The analysis includes randomized controlled trials and quasi-experiments focusing on MHL domains: knowledge of mental health, help-seeking behavior, and stigma. Data will be analyzed for bias and effect size to assess quality.

Results: Interactive elements, personalized content, and social support in DIs are expected to be more frequently used and linked to greater improvements in MHL, particularly in young adults. Preliminary results will be presented at the congress.

Conclusions: This meta-analysis provides an up-to-date overview of DI components investigated in MHL contexts, summarizing evidence beyond symptom reduction. Findings will help better understand effective DI components and inform the development of age-appropriate mental health promotion programs.

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What Matters Most? Predictive Validity of Biomarkers of Aging for Physical and Mental Health in the LIFE-Adult Study

Abstract

Cognitive and inflammatory biomarkers are commonly used as indicators of physical and mental health. These biomarkers are easily measurable and provide objective comparisons across individuals, making them integral to aging research.

However, aging is a complex, multifaceted process influenced by biological, socio-cultural, environmental, and personal factors. Given this multidimensional nature, it remains uncertain whether an individual's biological age, as indicated by biomarkers, can reliably predict subjective aging outcomes, beyond what is explained by chronological age alone.

In this study, we used a sample of 475 middle-aged and older adults from the LIFE-Adult study, a large interdisciplinary investigation of population aging. Our goal was to examine whether inflammatory biomarkers (Interleukin-6 and C-reactive Protein) and cognitive aging markers (visual-motor speed and working memory) could predict successful aging related outcome such as life satisfaction, physical and mental health, and daily functioning, independent of chronological age and socioeconomic factors. To evaluate the predictive validity of these biomarkers, we employed multiple linear regression models for each outcome of successful aging.

The results suggest that cognitive and inflammatory biomarkers do not consistently predict the outcomes studied. Instead, their influence varies depending on the specific outcome in question. We discuss these findings in relation to the mechanisms that might explain why objective biomarkers of aging and subjective experiences of aging are differentially associated.

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How do refugee students fare in German schools?

Abstract

This study examines the educational and personal development of refugee students in German schools, focusing on motivation, engagement, and academic performance. Individual factors such as German language proficiency and social support, as well as micro- (e.g., social support) and macro-contextual (e.g., like cultural distance) are considered. Utilising a two-step empirical approach, the research first involved in-depth interviews with refugee students, followed by standardised assessments with a sample of 112 refugee students aged 11-22.

Analyses by way of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) yield substantial correlations between German language proficiency, social support, cultural distance, and students' basic psychological needs, as spelled out by self-determination theory. These psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness— partly mediated the effects of the observed predictors on student engagement. The findings show that higher levels of social support and language proficiency, together with less cultural distance, promote the fulfillment of these psychological needs, resulting in increased student engagement and academic achievement.

The findings underscore the critical role of psychological needs in mediating these relationships, suggesting that interventions aimed at improving language skills, increasing social support, and reducing cultural barriers can significantly enhance the educational experiences and outcomes for refugee students in Germany. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of how to support refugee students' integration and academic achievement.

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Securely Stressed: The Role of Attachment in Empathic Stress within Romantic Relationships

Abstract

Stress-related disorders are prevalent in modern societies, with empathic stress adding to the load. Empathic stress arises when observing another person's stress triggers a stress response in the observer. To explore this phenomenon within romantic couples, we examined the relationship between empathic stress and adult attachment—a profound emotional bond between partners—focusing on its potential as both a risk and resilience factor. In this study, psychosocial stress was induced in one partner (the “target”) while the other (the “observer”) passively observed. Stress responses were assessed in both partners through salivary cortisol levels, heart rate, high-frequency heart rate variability (HF-HRV), and self-reported questionnaires. Additionally, observers' attachment styles were evaluated using the Adult Attachment Interview. Our findings revealed that dyads with securely attached observers exhibited higher cortisol resonance—meaning a stronger proportionality in stress responses between the target and the observer—compared to those with insecurely attached observers, particularly those with insecure-dismissing attachment. This supports the notion of secure attachment as a resilience factor, suggesting that securely attached individuals are better attuned to their partners during psychosocially stressful moments. This attunement likely fosters mutual understanding and encourages supportive behaviors. However, secure attachment may also present a potential risk, as these individuals could be more vulnerable to heightened empathic stress responses when faced with frequent or extreme partner stress, possibly leading to adverse health effects over time.

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