

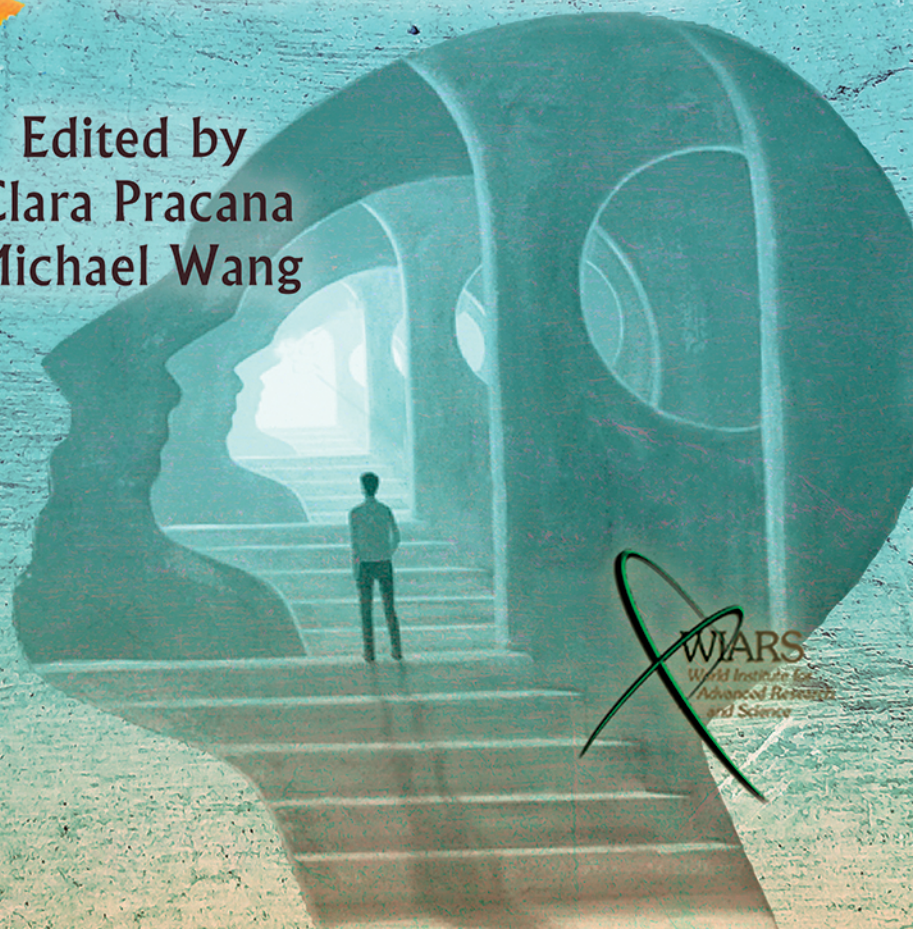
INTERNATIONAL PSYCHOLOGICAL APPLICATIONS CONFERENCE AND TRENDS

# IMPACT 2024

20 - 22 April  
Porto, PORTUGAL

## BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Edited by  
Clara Pracana  
Michael Wang



**International Psychological  
Applications Conference  
and Trends**

**(InPACT) 2024**

**Edited by:**

**Prof. Clara Pracana**

Full and Training Member of the Portuguese Association of Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic  
Psychotherapy, Portugal

&

**Prof. Michael Wang**

Emeritus Professor of Clinical Psychology, University of Leicester, United Kingdom

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## FOREWORD

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Dear Participants,

It is our pleasure to welcome you to the International Psychological Applications Conference and Trends (InPACT) 2024, held in Porto, Portugal, from 20 to 22 of April 2024. This conference serves as a platform for scholars, researchers, practitioners, and students to come together and share their latest findings, ideas, and insights in the field of psychology.

Over the next few days, we will be exploring some of the most cutting-edge research and theories in psychology. We have a diverse range of topics and speakers lined up for you, covering eight key areas: Clinical Psychology, Educational Psychology, Social Psychology, Legal Psychology, Cognitive and Experimental Psychology, Environmental Psychology, Health Psychology and Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytical Psychotherapy.

InPACT 2024 received 526 submissions, from more than 43 different countries all over the world, reviewed by a double-blind process. Submissions were prepared to take the form of Oral Presentations, Posters, Virtual Presentations and Workshops. 189 submissions (overall, 36% acceptance rate) were accepted for presentation at the conference.

As we all know, psychology is a vast and complex field that encompasses a wide range of topics, from the study of human behaviour to the workings of the brain. It is a field that has made enormous strides in recent years, and it continues to evolve at a rapid pace. At this conference, we hope to not only share the latest research and developments in psychology but also to foster a sense of community and collaboration among attendees. We believe that by working together, we can continue to advance the field of psychology and make important contributions to our understanding of the human mind and behaviour.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all of our speakers, sponsors, and attendees for making this conference possible. This book includes an extensive variety of contributors and presenters that are hereby sharing with us their different personal, academic, and cultural experiences.

The conference also includes:

- One keynote presentation by Dr Tori Snell (Consultant Clinical Psychologist, Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust; Director for International Relations – Association of Clinical Psychologists – UK (ACP-UK); Clinical Associate – Al Razi Medical Centre, Baghdad).
- Two Special Talks, one by Prof. Clara Pracana (Full and Training Member of the Portuguese Association of Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy, Portugal), and one by Prof. Dr. Michael Wang (Emeritus Professor of Clinical Psychology, University of Leicester, United Kingdom).

This volume is composed of the abstracts of the International Psychological Applications Conference and Trends (InPACT 2024), organized by the World Institute for Advanced Research and Science (WIARS).

We hope that this book with the abstracts of this conference will be a valuable resource for those in attendance, as well as for those who could not join us. Thank you for your participation, and we look forward to a productive and stimulating event!

Lastly, we would like to thank all the authors and participants, the members of the academic scientific committee, and, of course, the organizing and administration team for making and putting this conference together.

Looking forward to continuing our collaboration in the future,

Prof. Clara Pracana

*Full and Training Member of the Portuguese Association of Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy, Portugal  
Conference and Program Co-Chair*

Prof. Michael Wang

*Emeritus Professor of Clinical Psychology, University of Leicester, United Kingdom  
Conference and Program Co-Chair*



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## KEYNOTE LECTURE

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### **THE SLOW ROAD TO DECONSTRUCTING PSYCHOLOGY: A PERSONAL JOURNEY FROM FIELD WORK TO CLINICAL PRACTICE WITH WAR AFFECTED PEOPLE**

**Dr. Tori Snell**

*Consultant Clinical Psychologist, Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust;  
Director for International Relations - Association of Clinical Psychologists – UK (ACP-UK)  
(United Kingdom)*

*Clinical Associate – Al Razi Medical Centre, Baghdad (Iraq)*

#### **Abstract**

An important direction of travel for psychology involves the deconstruction, or decolonisation, of its largely ethnocentric infrastructure. The need for a more considered path can be applied to (post) conflict settings. Research into the experiences of people affected by war and armed conflict tends to be needs-led e.g., by humanitarian or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or else it seeks to understand the relation between stress exposure and mental health in the (post) conflict context. These approaches can be ‘extractive’, meaning that information is gained in ways that are more transactional than collaborative and with interpretations that risk being over simplified. Reflections on applying psychological theories, diagnoses (including diagnostic screening tools), and interventions with children and adults caught up in war-related violence and its ongoing aftermath in Iraq from 2006 to the present will be shared in this presentation to highlight the authority of their experiences and what was learned. Ethical dilemmas relating to research and clinical practice will be explored drawing from current perspectives.

---

#### **Biography**

Dr Tori Snell, BA (Hons), BSc (Hons), MSc, DClInPsy is a Consultant Clinical Psychologist working in the Addictions Directorate of Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL). Having completed a first degree in history, she started out as a journalist with the Washington Post followed by a beat on an Ohio daily (The Medina County Gazette) and, later, Reuters. Tori lived for many years in Southeast Asia, the Gulf and the Middle East as a trailing diplomatic spouse and ‘stay-at-home’ mother. Witnessing the disproportionate effects of historic and ongoing conflict on existing inequalities within these communities was central to her decision to switch careers. In 2008, she gained a place on the NHS-funded doctorate in clinical psychology at the University of Leicester. Prior to training, she worked in Jordan with a governmental organisation to assess the psychological experiences of recruits to the Iraqi security forces and with non-governmental organisations, including the Japanese non-profit NICCOD, evaluating psychosocial interventions, and providing support for children and families from Iraq and Palestine. The work with NICCOD was under the clinical supervision of the Consultant Psychiatrist, Dr Numan Ali with whom she still works remotely as an associate in his Baghdad-based clinic. From 2007-2019, Tori was appointed to several boards within the Norway-UK based Children and War Foundation and served as the English language editor of the Arab Journal of Psychiatry (2008-2023). Since 2015, she has held an honorary clinical teaching post on the Leicester DClInPsy course; and, as part of advocating for her profession, holds an elected post as a Director with the Association of Clinical Psychologists UK (ACP-UK).



## SPECIAL TALKS

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### ON TRANSIENCE: THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE

**Prof. Dr. Clara Pracana**

*Portuguese Association of Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytical Psychotherapy,  
Lisbon (Portugal)*

#### **Abstract**

The purpose of this talk is to reflect upon impermanence and change, from a psychological and psycho-analytical perspective. With change, comes loss and sometimes gain. Humans don't like change, we were not hardwired for that. It makes us suffer, specially with loss that come with it. This can include many types of change, some lighter, some very difficult like unemployment, divorce, aging and the loss of beauty; others that may be really dramatic, like disease and death.

It's our duty, as professionals, to reflect about it and help others to cope with this painful reality of life.

**Keywords:** *Transience, transitoriness, change, aging, loss, disease, death, mourning.*

---

#### **Biography**

Clara Pracana is a psychoanalyst, psychotherapist, coach, author and lecturer. She was born in the Azores, Portugal. She has a Ph.D. in Applied Psychology and a Masters in Clinical Psychology and Psychopathology. She is a founding and full member of the Portuguese Association of Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytical Psychotherapy, Portugal. She is a regular lecturer on psychoanalytical topics and has published several papers and four books. She is also a certified coach with the International Coaching Community (ICC). As a psychoanalyst, counselor, and coach, she has a private practice in Lisbon. Her research addresses anxiety, guilt and shame, depression, emotional intelligence, leadership, change, motivation, and group dynamics.

# THE ROLE OF THE EXPERT CLINICAL NEUROPSYCHOLOGIST IN THE UK CIVIL COURTS

**Prof. Dr. Michael Wang**

*Emeritus Professor of Clinical Psychology, University of Leicester (United Kingdom)*

## Abstract

In the UK, clinical neuropsychologists are often instructed by personal injury solicitors in cases of acquired or traumatic brain injury. Their role includes neuropsychological assessment and examination to determine condition and prognosis, as well as to advise on rehabilitation and future care needs. This leads directly to estimates of compensation to cover costs for rehabilitation and future care for the rest of the client's life. Because the UK court system is adversarial, there are usually two neuropsychological experts, one representing the client/patient, and one representing the defendant (usually an insurance company). This presentation will summarise common neuropsychological tests and profiles in acquired brain injury cases. It will also describe the various medico-legal consultation phases and outcomes.

---

## Biography

Prof. Michael Wang, BSc(Hons), MSc(Clin.Psy), PhD, C. Psychol., FBPsS, is Emeritus Professor of Clinical Psychology in the Clinical Psychology Unit, Centre for Medicine, University of Leicester, and former Director of the National Health Service-funded Doctoral Postgraduate Clinical Psychology Training Course (2005-2014). He is a former Chair of the Division of Clinical Psychology of the British Psychological Society. Prof. Wang is also a full practitioner member of the BPS Division of Neuropsychology and a member of the BPS Division of Health Psychology. He is Chair of the Association of Clinical Psychologists UK. He has worked as a clinical psychologist for 40 years. Prior to his appointment in Leicester he was Director of the 6-year, integrated Doctoral Clinical Psychology Training Course at the University of Hull. Throughout his academic career he has maintained an Honorary Consultant role in the NHS, treating patients with anxiety disorders, depression and obsessional compulsive disorder. He has more than 20 years' experience of examining patients with traumatic brain injury for the UK courts. He obtained his three degrees from the University of Manchester: following graduating with a BSc in Psychology in 1978 he began his professional postgraduate training in Clinical Psychology in the Faculty of Medicine. Subsequently he completed a research PhD in 1990 which investigated learning and memory in alcoholics. Over recent years Prof Wang has gained an international reputation for his research on cognitive and memory function during general anaesthesia. In 2004 he organized the 6th International Symposium on Memory and Awareness in Anaesthesia and Intensive Care (in Hull) – the foremost international forum for clinical research in this particular field. He has held appointments on a number of prominent committees in the British Psychological Society including the professional accrediting body for clinical psychology training, and a committee that is in the process of determining national standards for competence in the use of neuropsychological tests. He has served as an expert advisor on a NICE (UK) Committee in relation to the monitoring of depth of anaesthesia and also as an expert member of the Royal College of Anaesthesia's National Audit Project 5 (a national audit of anaesthetic awareness reports). In 1999 he was made Fellow of the British Psychological Society and is also a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine. In 2015 he was awarded the Humphry Davy Medal by the Royal College of Anaesthetists for his contribution to the understanding of accidental awareness during general anaesthesia. Prof. Wang has published more than 60 papers in peer-reviewed journals, and numerous book chapters. He has been an invited speaker at international conferences on more than 30 occasions. In collaboration with colleagues he has won more than £1.2 million in research funding. He has supervised more than 40 doctoral research projects over the past 25 years. He has been a regular contributor and session chair at recent InPACT conferences, and recently joined the conference team as a co-organiser.

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### PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC PLAYBACK THEATRE: THEATRE AS THERAPY

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#### Abstract

Playback Theatre (PT) will soon accomplish its 50 anniversary. From the very beginning, its effects on both audiences and performers led to the use of the expression “the therapeutic question”, referring to feedback related to many of the therapeutic factors and effects of group psychotherapies. Acknowledging its therapeutic potentiality, for more than a decade now, a therapeutic version of PT, called Psychotherapeutic Playback Theatre (PPT), was developed and practiced. In Portugal, a research project on the topic of PPT, funded by the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), was initiated in 2023. Its preliminary results will be presented in this paper. We will start by sharing a short depiction of the project, then follow it with an abstract of the systematic review of the literature published in the context of the project, and conclude by presenting some data concerning the participants involved in the PPT groups since established. The latter includes both the group of psychotherapists who received the first-ever training on PPT offered in Portugal and the therapy-centered participants of the groups that were established throughout the country.

**Keywords:** *Group therapy, Psychotherapeutic Playback Theatre, impact study, expressive arts.*

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### HOW DOES SOLUTION-FOCUSED MANAGEMENT INFLUENCE FOLLOWERSHIP BEHAVIOR?

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#### Abstract

The purpose of this research is to: (1) empirically clarify how solution-focused/problem-focused communication what is called “the solution management” in the workplace influences the followership behavior of Japanese non-managers and (2) empirically clarify the difference in the followership behavior of Japanese non-managers focusing on the difference in the nationalities of their manager. To fulfill these purposes, we took an empirical approach to verify hypotheses derived from past research. We conducted 300 full-time employees in Japanese organizations from a diverse range of industries to participate in this research through the Internet survey company. However, we excluded some answers because inappropriate responses were included. We wanted to examine the followership behavior of Japanese followers toward their managers, so we selected the respondent who was in a non-managerial position and whose manager was in a managerial position. Thus, the final analysis included 273 responses. The results of our analysis revealed the following two points. First, solution-focused management has a positive effect on followership (active behavior). Second, followers were more likely to take followership (critical behavior) and followership (considerate behavior) when their manager's nationality was not Japanese.

**Keywords:** *Solution-focused management, followership behavior, nationality of manager.*

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## THE MEMORY DIVISIONS OF TULVING VERSUS SQUIRE – ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES FOR NEUROPSYCHOLOGY AND MEMORY ASSESSMENT

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### Abstract

Though already at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century first attempts on long-term memory subdivisions had been proposed, it was only in the 1970ies and 1980ies that such divisions were recognized by a wide audience. From Endel Tulving came in 1972 the division of memory into episodic and semantic memory, from Mishkin and Petri in 1984 that on a ‘memory’ and a ‘habit’ system. Larry Squire then a bit later suggested a very elaborated outline of memory subdivisions. Commonalities of all proposals are the distinction between simple and complex, or unconsciously/implicitly versus consciously/explicitly acting. Tulving – in interaction with one of the authors (HJM) – nowadays divides into five long-term memory systems, of which two are unconscious (“anoetic” in his terminology), two conscious (“noetic”) and one self-conscious (“autonoetic”). These are – from simple to complex: ‘priming’, ‘procedural memory’, ‘perceptual memory’, ‘semantic memory’ and ‘episodic memory’. Squire’s subdivisions of memory are – compared to Tulving’s – both more simple in one way and more complex in another way: As a more simple distinction he uses the terms ‘declarative’ (consciously processed) and ‘nondeclarative’ (unconsciously processed) memory. He then divides ‘declarative memory’ into semantic and episodic memory, or memory for facts versus for events. ‘Nondeclarative memory’ he divides – similarly to Tulving – into ‘procedural’ and ‘priming’ memory, but then in addition into ‘simple classical conditioning’ and ‘nonassociative learning’. Advantages of Tulving’s model are the simpler divisions, and – above all – the clear separation of ‘episodic’ from ‘semantic’ memory. This last distinction is of major importance, as both neurological and psychiatric are usually not disturbed in ‘declarative memory’ in general, but only in its episodic part, while semantic facts are preserved. Therefore, to speak of impairment in ‘declarative memory’ is not useful. The further detailed diversification of ‘nondeclarative memory’ in Squire’s model is theoretically relevant, but of not much use in the general clinical practice (and is rarely ever tested in patients). Therefore, Tulving’s model of memory subdivisions is recommended from a practical-clinical point of view.

**Keywords:** *Episodic memory, semantic memory, procedural memory, priming.*

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## NATURE OF BODY IMAGE DISTORTION IN EATING DISORDERS

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### Abstract

Body size estimation of healthy women is driven by independent attitudinal and perceptual components. The attitudinal component represents psychological concerns about body. The perceptual component is perception of body size that seems to follow a bias known as contraction bias, and is dependent BMI. Women with a BMI less than the population norm tend to overestimate their size, while women with a BMI greater than the population norm tend to underestimate their size. Women whose BMI is close to the population mean are most accurate.

It is well established that people with eating disorders have attitudinal distortion. However, debate persists as to whether women with eating disorders may also suffer a perceptual body distortion. Here we ask whether women with eating disorders exhibit the normal contraction bias when they estimate their own body size. If they do not, this would suggest differences in the way that eating disordered process the perceptual aspects of body size in comparison to healthy controls.

We recruited 100 healthy controls and 33 women with a history of eating disorders. Critically, we ensured that both groups of participants represented comparable and adequate ranges of actual BMI (e.g. ~18 to ~40). 87.5% of the women with a history of eating disorders self-reported that they were either recovered or recovering, and 89.7% had had one or more instances of relapse. The mean time lapsed since first

diagnosis was 5 years. Participants were asked to fill number of psychometric measures (EDE-Q, BSQ, RSE, BDI) to establish the attitudinal component of their body image. Additionally, participants completed a method of adjustment psychophysical task, using photorealistic avatars calibrated for BMI, in order to provide an estimate of their own body size and shape.

Our data from the healthy controls replicate previous findings. For the eating disorder group, once the adequacy of their actual BMI ranges was established, a regression of estimated BMI on actual BMI had a slope greater than 1, significantly different to that from controls. This suggests that eating disordered individuals process the perceptual aspects of body image differently from healthy controls. The findings can be explained from attentional bias effect, with those with eating disorders having expertise effect only for smallest body sizes, together with avoidance effect, with the avoidance of body size contemplation for large body sizes. Interestingly, the effects seem to last beyond the acute illness phase. It may therefore be necessary to develop interventions which are specific to the perceptual processing of body shape and size for the management of individuals with eating disorders.

**Keywords:** *Eating disorders, body size, over-estimation, perception, BMI, history of eating disorders, anorexia nervosa.*

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## **GROSSLY REDUCED EFFORT – A MATTER OF WILL OR OF POSSIBILITY?**

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### **Abstract**

*Introduction:* In the past time we have studied a number of patients with dissociative amnesia – a condition in which retrograde amnesia and deficits in attention and concentration stand in the center. Already decades ago, but especially nowadays, we were confronted with patients without a history of dissociative amnesia who nevertheless manifested a similar symptomatology with respect to their lack of effort or inability to fulfill usual criteria for individuals with normal intelligence level. All three had no evidence of brain damage, but evidence of various stressful situations in their past. *Patients:* We will concentrate on three patients with the described symptomatology who were studied neuropsychologically in detail. At the time of testing, Patient 1 was a young man of 29 years, Patient 2 of man of 45 years, and Patient 3 a woman of 54 years of age. All had university education. While Patient 1 lived alone, the other two patients lived with their partners. *Patient 1.* Patient 1 had given up his studies and his job as an IT-specialist. He seemed to be unable to retain information for more ten minutes. His attention and concentration abilities were far below average. Problem solving abilities were normal. Retrograde memory was at least partially impaired. The lack of brain abnormalities was proven both with magnetic resonance imaging and fluor-positron emission tomography. *Patient 2.* Patient 2 had worked as a high-school teacher, but gave up due to major problems with long-term memory and attention and concentration, all of which were confirmed neuropsychologically. *Patient 3.* Patient 3 was medical doctor who stopped working in her private practice due to severe and lasting exhaustion which in part originated from additional stress during the covid-time. Her long-term memory was normal, but she had problems with more complex forms of attention and concentration and working memory. *Discussion and Conclusions:* Especially individuals in mentally demanding positions seem to be affected by long-term stressful situations for which they apparently had not developed sufficient coping strategies. However, contrary to patients with dissociative conditions, these individuals are fully self-conscious and reflect on their past. We argue that these patients do not have a reduced will – at least not consciously – but just do not have the possibility to make enough effort long-term, because they immediately fall back into a pattern of stress reactions.

**Keywords:** *Stress, attention, concentration, memory.*

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## **THE EXPERIENCES OF ADOLESCENT DAUGHTERS OF MOTHERS DIAGNOSED WITH BORDERLINE PERSONALITY DISORDER**

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### **Abstract**

This study aimed to describe, interpret and gain deep insight into the lived experiences of adolescent (aged 12–18) daughters with mothers diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD). As this disorder is characterized by substantial impairment in terms of interpersonal functioning and implies a deeply-rooted identity disturbance, the question is how this will affect the mothering abilities of women diagnosed with the disorder. Specifically, mothering adolescent daughters in the fifth developmental phase where they are confronted with identity forming versus identity confusion. It seems that the need of the adolescents for parental and specific maternal support is in discordance with the maternal capacities of BPD mothers. An anxious/ambivalent, avoidant, or insecure/disorganised attachment is likely to be established even before the child reaches the adolescent phase. The risk exists for a transgenerational pattern to develop and risk and protective factors play an important role in this regard.

This qualitative study was interpretative and phenomenological and eleven participants were interviewed on two occasions 6 months apart.

**Keywords:** *Borderline Personality Disorder, adolescent daughters, attachment, transgenerational pattern, parenting styles.*

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## **THE MEDIATING ROLE OF EMOTION REGULATION DIFFICULTY BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION AND SOCIAL ANXIETY**

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### **Abstract**

The aim of this study is to investigate the mediating role of emotion regulation difficulties in the relationship between social media addiction and social anxiety in adolescents. A total of 188 females and 125 males in the age range of 10 to 18 participated in the study. Data were collected between September 2022 and January 2023 and convenience sampling method was used. Participants were provided with a demographic information form, the Social Anxiety Scale for Adolescents (SAC), the Social Media Addiction Scale Short Form for Adolescents (SMAS-SF), and the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS). In the analyses, the mediating model was examined, and the findings demonstrated a significant and partial mediating role of emotion regulation difficulties in the relationship between social media addiction and social anxiety. Specifically, lack of emotional clarity, difficulties in engaging in goal-directed behavior, and non-acceptance of emotional responses mediated this relationship. The model accounted for 22% of the variability observed in social anxiety. Also, the direct and total effect of social media addiction on social anxiety symptoms were significant. Social media addiction may have adverse effects on one's ability to regulate their emotions, potentially resulting in a detrimental impact on emotional clarity, hindering the acceptance of emotional responses, and decreasing the capacity to cope with negative emotional experiences. Therefore, it could be advantageous to involve mental health experts specializing in adolescent psychology in assessing emotion regulation skills within the context of the connection between social media addiction and social anxiety. Implementing interventions aimed at enhancing these skills may have a positive impact on the psychotherapeutic process, fostering greater motivation and self-assurance in therapy clients.

**Keywords:** *Social media addiction, social anxiety symptoms, difficulties in emotion regulation, adolescence.*

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## PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF INDIVIDUALS WITH HEALTH ANXIETY

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### Abstract

Hypochondria is at the center of debates about the mind-body problem in that those individuals with this symptom experience physical complaints in the absence of 'real' illness. Individuals with hypochondria have been recognized for their tendency to seek reassurance from both significant others and healthcare professionals. Paradoxically, they are also known for rejecting the reassurance offered to them. Consequently, in the present study, the researchers proposed that gaining insight into the transference dynamics established with hypochondriac individuals could enhance psychotherapies where the patient-therapist relationship holds greater significance. Although there have been many quantitative and qualitative studies on health anxiety, the researchers adopted a comprehensive perspective to explore the feelings, perceptions, and actions of individuals with hypochondria concerning their somatic complaints, as well as their interactions with healthcare professionals. The person-centered nature of qualitative research allowed the researchers to approach the participants as human beings. The sample consisted of 14 individuals with high health anxiety, and their ages were between 19-55 years old. The data were collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews. The Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis method, which offers a systematic approach to study participants' subjective experiences, was used. As a result, four superordinate themes emerged: 'Causal attributions of health anxiety: Loss at the core as unfinished business,' 'Being drawn into a vortex of symptoms,' 'Endless calls to experts for naming own experiences and eliminating uncertainty,' and 'Every cloud has a silver lining: Benefits of being/feeling ill.' For the first theme, a significant number of participants acknowledged the influence of an anxious parental figure on their health anxiety. The transmission of anxiety from one generation to the next appeared to revolve around unresolved concerns about loss. Moving to the second theme, participants described their struggles to refrain from engaging in behaviors they feared or complained about. Monitoring their bodies for even minor changes led to web searches for information and symptom control, frequent doctor visits, and heightened attention to lifestyle habits. Paradoxically, these efforts sometimes increased anxiety instead of reducing it. Participants acknowledged overthinking future negative scenarios, such as illness or death, as a way to prepare for potential challenges. Seeking more information and attempting to control their health had a dual effect, both reducing and enhancing anxiety. It seemed that individuals with health anxiety found some enjoyment or routine in health-related activities, whether consciously or unconsciously. Regarding the third theme, the study aimed to explore how individuals with health anxiety interacted with healthcare professionals and understand their expectations. Participants expressed a need for physicians to label their experiences and dispel doubts about their health conditions. While support from physicians meeting their criteria for a "good physician" provided relief, it did not fully alleviate health concerns. Expectations were often unmet due to ambiguous expectations or the inherent uncertainty of illness and death. Many participants felt misunderstood and insufficiently cared for by physicians, highlighting the need for better communication. For the last theme, nearly all participants discussed the perceived benefits of being or feeling ill despite the associated costs. Receiving attention and care, using health anxiety as a coping mechanism for life difficulties, reprioritizing responsibilities, and experiencing relief were identified as these benefits. The findings have implications for mental and physical health professionals, emphasizing the importance of understanding the intertwined physical and psychological aspects of individuals with health anxiety. The emphasis on loss experiences suggests the need to address this issue in therapeutic interventions. Additionally, providing information about the non-serious nature of physical symptoms had only a short-term relaxing effect, necessitating a focus on helping patients understand the persistence of their desire for self-awareness after establishing a therapeutic alliance in therapeutic settings.

**Keywords:** *Hypochondriasis, health anxiety, somatization, interpretative phenomenological analysis.*

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## THE APPLICATION OF AWARENESS INTEGRATION THEORY, A TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE MODALITY: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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### Abstract

Individuals impacted by trauma often have difficulty making sense of past traumatic events, memories, thoughts, feelings, and physical responses. Awareness Integration Theory (AIT) offers a trauma-informed care model by integrating emotional, cognitive, and somatic disconnects, helping the individual reach mental equilibrium. This innovative and non-invasive technique is based on Trauma-informed care principles, understanding the pervasive nature of trauma while promoting an atmosphere of healing. Using scientific techniques of self-awareness, neuroplasticity, internalization, and integration, AIT assists the individual in creating a trauma narrative by acknowledging the traumatic cognitive and emotional schemes yet bypassing the re-traumatization of these events that may inadvertently lead to the client's regressive mode. Using trauma-informed care philosophy, AIT approaches the core beliefs, emotions, and physical/physiological attributes, helping the individual become aware of their experiences and the emotional and cognitive aftermath that led to their current state of being. The AIT technique includes a) creating the trauma narrative script accounting for the sequence of events that led to the traumatic experience, b) empowering the individual by reviewing the story and finding the internal psychological disconnects, c) recreating the narrative in an integrated modality connecting the emotional, cognitive, and behavior domains of self and moving forward.

**Keywords:** Awareness Integration Theory, trauma-informed treatment, trauma-informed care, trauma narrative, psychological integration.

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## SPIRITUALITY VS. RELIGIOSITY: HOW THEY MODERATE THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN EMOTIONAL LONELINESS AND ANXIETY

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### Abstract

Most older people are vulnerable to experiencing loneliness because they are faced with negative life conditions such as the death of significant others, living alone, and health-related issues. They may experience a specific form of loneliness which is emotional loneliness. It arises from a lack of a close, intimate attachment to another person. In the literature, emotional loneliness is related to some psychological problems such as anxiety and isolation feelings (Weiss, 1973). On the other hand, religious involvement and spiritual commitment were associated with greater life satisfaction, decreased depressive symptoms, optimism, and better emotional adjustment among older individuals. Additionally, they experienced less anxiety (Kraaij, Garnefski, & Maes, 2002; Yoon & Lee, 2008). Older people may also

engage in more religious and spiritual rituals which could protect them from adverse outcomes such as loneliness and mental health problems (Muhammad, Pai, Afsal, Saravanakumar, & Irshad, 2023). Defining spirituality involves having a purposeful life, searching for meaning, and trying to interpret personal illness and death in a way that makes sense (McCoubrie & Davies, 2006). While spirituality and religiosity are related concepts, some researchers argue that they differ. While spirituality involves a personal exploration for meaning in life, religiosity includes an organized institution with rituals and practices centered around a higher power or God (Arrey, Bilsen, Lacor, & Deschepper, 2016). Furthermore, there are researchers differentiating religiosity within itself. Allport and Ross proposed the intrinsic/extrinsic religious orientation, asserting that a person intrinsically motivated by their religious beliefs embodies and lives by their faith (Allport, 1966; Allport & Ross, 1967). For such an individual, religion serves as a fundamental life motive and an internalized value. However, an extrinsically motivated individual employs religion as a mere tool, utilizing it to an end rather than accepting it as a deeply integrated internal value in their life. Thus, the current study aims to investigate the relationship between emotional loneliness and anxiety in older people and examine the moderator role of spirituality and religiosity in this relationship. Data was collected by using questionnaires from 237 Turkish participants between 65-90 years old ( $M= 70.87$ ,  $SD= 5.55$ ). Turkish versions of the short version of The Social and Emotional Loneliness Scale for Adults (SELSA-S), Spirituality Scale (SS) and Allport-Ross Religious Orientation Scale were used. In the religious orientation scale, high scores show intrinsic religious orientation while low scores show extrinsic religious orientation. To examine the moderator roles of spirituality and religiosity on the relationship between emotional loneliness and anxiety levels, two moderation analyses were conducted through Hayes Process Macro in SPSS. The findings indicated that although spirituality did not moderate the association between emotional loneliness and anxiety, this relationship was significantly moderated by religiosity ( $B = .02$ ,  $p = .048$ ). Specifically, higher levels of emotional loneliness were linked with higher anxiety symptoms for older people high in extrinsic religiosity ( $B = .30$ ,  $p = .001$ ) but not for ones with high intrinsic religiosity ( $B = .06$ ,  $ns$ ). The findings suggested that inner religious motivation protects older people against specific mental health problems in the Turkish cultural context, where religiosity holds significant importance. Understanding how that age group of people experiences loneliness and how loneliness is related to psychological problems would provide important information about the prevention of psychological problems and the development of some interventions.

**Keywords:** *Emotional loneliness, anxiety, spirituality, religiosity, older people.*

## **PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT AND ANXIETY: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF SELF-COMPASSION AND THE MODERATING ROLE OF CULTURE**

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### **Abstract**

The aim of the study was to examine whether perceived social support is related to anxiety and whether self-compassion accounts for the relationship between perceived social support and anxiety, among Jewish and Arab in Israel. 520 participants (309 Jews, 211 Arabs; 49% male, 51% female;  $M$  age=40.31,  $SD=12.03$ ), filled an online questionnaire that included: Demographic information, self-compassion, social support and anxiety scales. Results showed that higher levels of perceived social support were associated with lower levels of anxiety. Self-compassion acted as a mediator between perceived social support and anxiety. In addition, culture had a moderating effect on the relation between perceived social support and self-compassion as well as on the relation between self-compassion and anxiety: The mediation effect is stronger for Arabs compared to Jews. The results confirm previous research of self-compassion as a mediator and add to the unfolding research of possible interaction between culture and self-compassion.

**Keywords:** *Self-compassion, perceived social support, anxiety, culture.*



## TEACHERS' WELL-BEING IN SLOVENIA: THE ROLE OF MINDFULNESS AND MINDFUL TEACHING

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### Abstract

The need to support teachers is more pressing every day as the teacher shortage is becoming an acute problem across Europe. One of the possible mechanisms leading to teachers leaving the profession are increased levels of stress and burnout. Stress influences processes crucial for successful teaching and learning, that is attention, decision making and the quality of relationships. The increase in reported emotional difficulties reflected in increased levels of stress and burnout in teachers across Europe adds to the importance of co conceptual understanding of the underlying processes as well as support mechanisms for teachers' well-being. As mindfulness has documented benefits for one's own well-being as well as on relationships with others, it is one of the possible mechanisms of support. In the present paper, we empirically test this hypothesis by analysing the predictive power of mindfulness for teachers' well-being, e.g., well-being and burnout, as well as behaviour in the classroom, e.g., mindful teaching. In addition, we test the indirect paths leading from mindfulness to selected outcomes through mindful teaching. We use data from the Slovenian sample of the project "HAND IN HAND: Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity Related Career Challenges" ( $n = 272$ ; 253 women). The teachers involved in the project "HAND IN HAND" were provided with a battery of measurement tools focusing on their social, emotional and diversity awareness competencies. In this paper, we will use the data from The Mindful Attention Awareness Scale, WHO-5 Wellbeing Scale, Mindfulness in teaching and Shirom-Melamed Burnout Questionnaire. The findings show significant direct paths from mindfulness to well-being, burnout and intrapersonal (and not interpersonal) dimension of mindful teaching. The indirect paths from mindfulness to wellbeing and burnout through mindful teaching were not significant.

**Keywords:** *Teachers, mindfulness, mindful teaching, burnout, well-being, Slovenia.*

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## STANDARDISING MEDICAL SECLUSION REVIEWS AT THE HARBOR PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL

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### Abstract

**Background:** Seclusion is a common method used to contain severe behavioural disturbance in psychiatric patients. Given the nature of the treatment the Mental health act 1983 (2015) advise regular medical reviews of patients in seclusion. Medical reviews are often conducted by junior doctors with little or no psychiatric experience, and with little awareness of guidance, standard of reviews often vary. **Aim:** To understand the impact of a template on the quality of seclusion review documentation by Junior doctors within the hospital. **Methods:** We retrospectively collected data on seclusion reviews 1 month prior to any intervention. After discussion with MDT including psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses, and junior doctors, formulated a documentation template for reviews. All juniors were made aware of this template. Data was collected 1 month after implementation of template to assess their use. Doctors' opinions were also evaluated by feedback surveys. **Results:** Prior to to the implementation of the template, although general physical health and reasons for seclusion were well documented, more in depth aspects were missed such as diet and fluid intake, physical observations, seclusion information and nursing team input. Following implementation of the template documentation of information in all relevant fields improved except for fluid and dietary intake. Junior doctors felt more confident in conduction seclusion reviews and nursing team felt more involved in reviews. **Conclusion:** Implementation of a template for documenting seclusion reviews improved quality of reviews by junior doctors and is expected to improve quality of care and patient safety and also communication between professionals.

**Keywords:** *Medical, seclusion review, guidance, template, standard.*

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## **SEX AND THE CLERGY: AN INSIDER PERSPECTIVE ON ATTITUDES TOWARDS CELIBACY**

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### **Abstract**

Sexuality is an important part of the human experience. It can be considered a sensitive topic especially in a religious context. Manliness, on the other hand, has been emphasised by the Catholic Church for many years (van Es, 2021). One example of this is through the support of male-dominant gender hierarchies in the Church (Gerber, 2015). Men and masculinities seem to be understudied in the religious sphere and studies on gender and religion tend to centre around women (Romeo Mateo, 2021). There is literature about celibacy and loneliness, however, many of these studies are among involuntary celibates known as incels (Sparks et al., 2023). Research on the intersection of sexuality, masculinity, and religion among clergy is lacking. This is surprising, since celibacy is a notable pillar of priesthood in the Catholic Church. It is especially so in the Maltese context where the ratio of priests in the community is high compared to other secularized societies. It is therefore important to understand what part sexuality plays in the life of a celibate person, especially in the context of hegemonic masculinity. This is because priests tend to fall between two male stereotypes: the hegemonic man and the biblical man (Roger, 2019). Hence, the aim of the study is to investigate whether there is a relationship between celibacy, manhood beliefs and loneliness. A survey will be carried out among a sample of Roman Catholic priests living in Malta. Questions from three scales will be used in the questionnaire: the Commitment to Celibacy Scale (Joseph et al., 2010), the Loneliness Scale (de Jong Grieveld & Van Tilburg, 2006), and a manhood beliefs scale. The expected sample size is 150 male priests. There is an expected association between attitudes towards celibacy and manhood beliefs, as well as between attitudes towards celibacy and loneliness. However, the direction of the relationship will be determined by the results of the study.

**Keywords:** *Celibacy, manhood beliefs, loneliness, priests, attitudes.*

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## **DEVELOPMENT OF A SOCIAL SKILLS CHECKLIST FOR ADULTS AND EXAMINATION OF ITS PSYCHOMETRIC PROPERTIES**

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### **Abstract**

Social skills are mostly studied in children and adolescents. However, social skill problems are also seen in adults, but there are few studies on the subject in this group. It is considered that the source of this problem is the scarcity of measurement tools for adults. In this regard, this study aimed to develop a social skills checklist for the adult group. A three-stage study was planned, including the creation of the item pool, item selection, and validity procedures. First, an item pool containing 115 items was created. This item pool was applied to a total of 778 people, 398 men and 380 women, between the ages of 18-65. At this stage, 45 items were selected using item response theory and item analysis. At this stage, the study data was divided into two parts, and explanatory and confirmatory factor analysis was applied to each. It was observed that the two sub-dimensions of the scale, created from the selected items, named "Affective Components" and "Cognitive Components", explained 34.808% of the total variance. Confirmatory factor analysis results revealed that the two-dimensional structure showed model fit. In this study, the internal consistency reliability coefficient was found to be .935 for the whole scale, .910 for the Affective Components sub-dimension, and .881 for the Cognitive Components sub-dimension. The third stage and the second application were made for the test-retest process. A total of 60 people, 24 men and 26 women, between the ages of 18-57, participated in this application. The test-retest reliability coefficient was .825 for the whole scale,  $r = .782$  for the Affective Components sub-dimension, and  $r = .833$  for the Cognitive Components sub-dimension. The results obtained showed that the initial validity and reliability values of the developed checklist were at an acceptable level.

**Keywords:** *Social skill, adult, affective component, cognitive component, check list.*

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## WELLBEING OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS FROM SERBIA: THE ROLE OF GENDER, SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS AND ETHNIC BACKGROUND

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### Abstract

All countries complying with the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals are committed to reducing poverty and socioeconomic disparities, ensuring inclusion, and improving health and wellbeing of its citizens. However, it is known that the odds for youth to thrive are significantly affected by their gender, socioeconomic and ethnic groups' positions within society. To explore the impact of these variables on the wellbeing of youth in Serbia, we conducted a study recruiting students from 20 secondary schools from different regions of the country. Participants were 1846 students ( $M_{\text{age}} = 16.26$ ; 52.6% female, 69.9% identified as Serbian (ethnic majority), 10.8% Hungarian, 11.1% Bosniak, and 8.2% Roma). We applied the scale *Personal Wellbeing Index* and we used one five-point Likert type item to assess depression. SES was measured through one question with five categories. Results indicate that students are relatively satisfied with their life ( $M = 7.4$ ,  $SD = 2.7$ ), with highest satisfaction with health and lowest satisfaction with financial status and achievements, while the scores for depression slightly surpass theoretical mean ( $M = 2.36$ ,  $SD = 1.39$ ). Students of different SES statistically significantly differ on all aspects of wellbeing and on depression, with wellbeing consistently increasing and depression decreasing with the rise of SES. When students of different ethnic backgrounds are compared, significant differences appear only for satisfaction with financial status, but the effect size is small. Female students have significantly lower scores for overall life satisfaction, satisfaction with relationships and safety, and higher scores on depression, but effect sizes are small. A regression analysis revealed that gender, SES and ethnic background can predict depression and wellbeing, but that only students' SES proved to be a significant predictor.

**Keywords:** *Life satisfaction, depression, socioeconomic status (SES), ethnicity, secondary school students.*

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## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARANOIA AND HOSTILITY: THE ROLE OF META-BELIEFS

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### Abstract

Paranoia is a common phenomenon that covers a continuum from slight everyday suspicion to severe delusions of persecution. It is considered helpful for survival because it protects individuals from the malevolent intentions of others, but over-reliance on this mechanism impairs individual functioning. Paranoid beliefs are associated with a harmful and malevolent view of others and an external attribution style that would help reduce a sense of internal threat. The paranoid thought process is associated with several metacognitive dysfunctions, such as difficulties with decentralization, cognitive fusion, and personalization bias. Several researchers have found associations between paranoia, self-hatred, and self-persecution, which is the most damaging form of self-criticism and most linked to psychopathology. Furthermore, paranoia is associated with aggressive attitudes, leading others to react in a way that confirms the belief that they intend to harm. Given the lack of clarity in the interplay between paranoia, self-hatred, and aggression and the relevance of investigating the antecedents of interpersonal violence, the present study set out to clarify the relationship between these variables. A sample of 564 participants ( $M = 35.12$ ,  $SD = 12.8$ ), including 389 females and 175 males, were recruited from the general population. They were asked to fill out online questionnaires designed to investigate the presence of specific symptomatology, levels of self-criticism, and meta-beliefs about it. Since self-criticism is an

internal hostility mechanism that reinforces negative beliefs about oneself by increasing the sense of external threat from which the individual feels he/she must defend him/herself, the first hypothesis was that self-hatred would partially mediate the relationship between paranoia and hetero-directed hostility. Furthermore, given the relevance of the role of negative self-evaluation in psychopathology and in order to assess the factors that exacerbate the perceived sense of threat leading to aggression, it was hypothesized that the relationship between paranoia and hostility would change as a function of positive meta-beliefs about self-persecution. Mediation analysis showed that self-hatred partially mediates the relationship between paranoia and hostility, supporting the hypothesis of a sense of inferiority and worthlessness regulated through external attribution. In addition, the belief that one deserves self-persecution and self-punishment was found to moderate the relationship between paranoia and hostility, confirming that for higher levels of positive meta-beliefs about self-criticism, the relationship between paranoia and hostility is stronger. Given the evidence of associations between suspicious attitudes towards others, characterized by anger and impulsivity, and subsequent violent behavior, it is of paramount importance to study the antecedents of such risky behavior, which is extremely harmful to society, to develop more effective prevention interventions.

**Keywords:** *Paranoia, hostility, hated-self, meta-beliefs, interpersonal violence.*

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## **THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF MINDFULNESS RETREATS ON PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH WELL-BEING OF NON-CLINICAL INDIVIDUALS**

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### **Abstract**

In recent decades, the art of mindfulness has gained popularity in Western societies, merging this Buddhist practice with popular modern culture. The popularity of this consciousness explorative technique has also crept into the scientific field of psychology, where more than 200 research studies have supported its efficacy with plenty of empirical data. The addition of scientific evidence has given mindfulness comforting confidence to the practitioners engaged in this healing process. It has also gained popularity with non-clinical individuals who practice it by helping them bring clarity, relief, awareness, and peace to millions. However, there is still a dire need to fully understand mindfulness therapy's process and effectiveness to maximize its potency. As supportive as the scientific data has been in validating mindfulness in stress reduction and anxiety management, there has been very little research on its potential downsides. Although it is vital to understand the history and lineage of this process, it is necessary to understand the proper use of mindfulness techniques, how it should be practiced, and in what mode of delivery it will maximize the user's benefit. Using existing evidence-based and secondary empirical data, this paper will explore the latest scientific discoveries on teaching individuals in a retreat setting to become conscious-minded using nature-based mindfulness techniques and how to employ them in everyday life while committing to a healthy lifestyle.

Furthermore, the authors will explore the pitfalls and the shortcomings of existing research on the benefits of mindfulness retreats. Finally, this paper will explore the possibility of standardized retreat protocols, appropriate techniques, and the intricate criteria for maximizing mindfulness meditation techniques in a retreat setting. Based on the findings, the authors will propose an optimized design for a mindfulness-guided retreat using nature-based and ecological criteria to help the participants gain knowledge on how to control negative self-talk, learn to manage stress and reduce anxiety, develop emotional regulation skills, and maintain neurological adjustment in high-stress life circumstances.

**Keywords:** *Mindfulness retreat, nature-based self-help, meditation.*

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## WHICH TYPES OF LONELINESS DO PREDICT GERIATRIC DEPRESSION?

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### Abstract

In the literature, it was argued that two or more qualitatively distinct types of loneliness exist (Russell et al., 1984). One of the most known typologies in terms of the source of loneliness was made by Weiss (1973, 1974), and accordingly, there are two types of loneliness: emotional and social loneliness (as cited in Russell et al., 1984). Emotional loneliness arises when one lacks a deep, intimate connection with another individual. Social loneliness, however, occurs when there is an absence of a social network wherein the person is part of a group of friends with shared interests and activities (Russell et al., 1984). In addition to these two types, Ettema et al. (2010) mentioned a third type of loneliness, which is existential loneliness. Existential loneliness is characterized by an unbearable sense of emptiness, sadness, and yearning arising from an awareness of the fundamental separateness inherent in being human. Importantly, the presence of others does not alleviate the experience of existential loneliness, as human beings are alone in the anticipation of their death (Mayers, Khoo, Svartberg, 2002). Researchers who approach loneliness as a multifaceted concept contend that various forms of loneliness are associated with distinct psychological issues. Weiss is one such researcher, asserting that emotional loneliness is more closely tied to feelings of anxiety and isolation, while social loneliness is linked to sensations of boredom, purposelessness, and depression (Weiss, 1973). However, Russell et al. (1984) proposed that emotional loneliness is more strongly connected to depression, whereas social loneliness is associated with both anxiety and depression. In contrast, existential loneliness is believed to be a primary source of anxiety, as it encompasses one's profound fear of death (Mayers & Svartberg, 2001) and is also correlated with depression (Park, 2006). It seems that there is no clear correspondence between the types of loneliness and psychological problems. Moreover, in the literature, comorbidity between anxiety and depression has been shown in various studies (e.g., Lenze, 2003). Thus, in this study instead of looking at anxiety and depression in a separate way, depression was chosen to examine how different types of loneliness have an influence on it. In the current study, combining social and emotional loneliness with a third type of loneliness, existential loneliness, their relationship with geriatric depression was examined in individuals whose ages were above 65 since these loneliness types have significant influences on older people's depressive symptoms. Participants were selected through convenience sampling from Türkiye. The only exclusion criterion was residence in rest homes, aimed at controlling potential impacts of living conditions. The sample comprised 237 individuals (57.8% female,  $n = 137$ ; 42.2% male,  $n = 100$ ) with ages from 65 to 90 ( $M = 70.87$ ,  $SD = 5.55$ ). Demographic Information Form, Turkish versions of short version of The Social and Emotional Loneliness Scale for Adults (SELSA-S), The Existential Loneliness Questionnaire (ELQ) and Geriatric Depression Scale were administered. A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was performed to investigate the association between different types of loneliness and depression after controlling the demographic variables including gender, marital status, education level, number of children, perceived SES, and having psychological and physical problems. A total of 237 participants who were above 65 years old were included in the analysis. Firstly, multicollinearity was checked, and the results showed no multicollinearity between three types of loneliness. Then, after controlling those demographic variables, existential, social, and emotional loneliness significantly predicted geriatric depression levels ( $\beta = .23$ ,  $t = 3.95$ ,  $p < .001$ ;  $\beta = .18$ ,  $t = 3.01$ ,  $p < .01$ ;  $\beta = .31$ ,  $t = 4.90$ ,  $p < .001$ , respectively). All IVs in the last step significantly explained 41% of the variance ( $Adjusted R^2 = .41$ ,  $F(10,199) = 15.61$ ,  $p < .001$ ). These results showed that older people who were high in emotional, existential, and social loneliness tended to experience higher levels of depressive symptoms beyond the impact of demographic variables. In conclusion, the findings implicated that addressing different kinds of loneliness and promoting social networks seems crucial for preventing and managing depressive symptoms in older adults.

**Keywords:** Existential loneliness, social loneliness, emotional loneliness, geriatric depression.

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## EVALUATION OF COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL EFFECTS OF PERSONALITY-BASED SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION IN CANADA

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### **Abstract**

This study evaluated the effectiveness of the Preventure program with students in a medium sized school district in Western Canada. Preventure is a selective prevention program that screens students on four distinct personality types: sensation-seeking (SS), anxiety sensitivity (AS), negative thinking (NT), and impulsivity (IMP). Each of these traits is linked to both the risk of early substance use and subsequent onset of mental health concerns. The tested program tailors a brief intervention to reduce cognitive and behavioral risks in higher risk students based on their personality.

**Method:** At the start of the study, 576 grade eight students were screened using the Substance Use Risk Profile scale (SURPS) to assess the four personality traits. Of these students, 268 students (46.2%) exceed risk criteria on one or more of the personality types. For the evaluation, two of the four schools were randomly assigned to receive training immediately (Trained Schools) with the other two schools receiving delayed implementation the following year (Untrained Schools). In the two training schools, 94 students were invited to participate in Preventure training groups with 44 students completing the training. During the following year, all students took part in three health surveys that included questions about substance use and measures of their substance use cognitions (i.e., expectancies and memory associations).

**Results:** The substance use measures were analyzed over three time points using zero-inflated negative binomial tests. Students who received Preventure training or who attended schools that had the training were significantly less likely to begin using tobacco, vapes, cannabis, and illicit drugs and used cannabis less frequently than those in Untrained Schools. Cannabis cognitive associations were also lower in Trained Schools and fully mediated differences in Trained versus Untrained schools. Past year alcohol use and initiation of alcohol use were unaffected.

**Conclusions:** These findings support other international findings for the efficacy of Preventure in reducing substance use in teens. Cognitive mediation analysis suggests that reductions in risky associations partially mediate positive treatment effects on Cannabis use. This finding is the first to reveal one possible cognitive mechanism for the effects of Preventure.

**Keywords:** *Substance abuse prevention, adolescents, personality, targeted prevention.*

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## PERSONALITY TRAITS RELEVANT TO DEPRESSION: OLD ASSOCIATIONS, NEW PERSPECTIVES

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### **Abstract**

Although depression is one of the most common mental health problems globally, there are few studies on the relationship between depressive symptoms and personality traits. It has been suggested that personality is an important risk factor for depression. However, due to the multidimensional structure of personality, there is a need for multivariate and large-scale studies involving individual participants. The aim of this study is to examine the effects of the multidimensional structure of personality on the relationship between depressive symptoms and personality traits. 528 women (mean age = 35.16, s = 11.93) who were reached by convenience sampling method and did not apply to a clinic were evaluated with the CES-Depression Scale, the Beck Depression Inventory and 220-item long form of the Five-Factor Personality Inventory. Participants were divided into three groups, those one standard deviation below and above the mean, using the CES-Depression Scale and the Beck Depression Inventory total scores. Then, the Five Factor Personality Inventory sub-dimensions and factor total scores of the three groups created using both the CES-Depression Scale and the Beck Depression Inventory total scores were compared with MANOVA. It was observed that the three groups formed using both the CES-Depression Scale and Beck Depression Inventory total scores differed in terms of all five-factor total scores. When the three groups formed by using the CES-Depression Scale total scores were compared in terms of sub-dimensions, differences were found between the groups in 15 (Liveliness, Assertiveness,

Interaction, Tolerance, Calmness, Agreement/Reconciliation, Soft Heartedness/Altruism, Orderliness, Responsibility/Deliberateness, Emotional Lability, Proneness to Anxiety, Self Assureness, Analytical Thinking, Sensitivity, Openness to Newness) of 17 sub-dimensions, and no difference was observed in the Rules Boundness and Excitement Seeking sub-dimensions. When the three groups formed using the Beck Depression Inventory total scores were compared, there were differences between the groups in 15 (Liveliness, Assertiveness, Interaction, Tolerance, Calmness, Agreement/Reconciliation, Orderliness, Responsibility/Deliberateness, Excitement Seeking, Emotional Lability, Proneness to Anxiety, Self Assureness, Analytical Thinking, Sensitivity, Openness to Newness) of the 17 sub-dimensions, and no difference was observed in the Rules Boundness and Altruism sub-dimensions. Most of the personality traits examined were found to be associated with depressive symptoms. These findings are important in that they show the importance of personality in risk factors for depression.

**Keywords:** *Depression, personality, trait, multidimensional personality traits.*

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## **ANXIETY, SOCIAL DESIRABILITY, AND COPING STYLES IN HYPERSEXUAL AND NON-HYPERSEXUAL MEN**

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### **Abstract**

Compulsive sexual behaviors (hypersexuality) include intense focus on sexual fantasies, urges or behaviors that an individual cannot control. The data on hypersexuality is limited. Until now it was proved that people suffering compulsive sexual behaviors experience high levels of distress and anxiety, and report difficulties in personal and professional areas of their life. In order to verify the levels of anxiety, social desirability and preferred coping styles of hypersexual persons, and to compare their results to the data obtained from the general population the empirical study was conducted. In the study the tendency for repression in hypersexual respondents in comparison to respondents recruited from the general population was also assessed. In the presented project 52 volunteer men participated, out of which 26 were diagnosed with hypersexuality and were recruited in the treatment center where they've attended their therapy, and remaining 26 respondents were recruited from the general population so they resembled all sociodemographics except for compulsive sexual behaviors. In order to verify the levels of anxiety, social desirability, and coping styles Trait Anxiety Scale, Social Desirability Questionnaire and mini-COPE were used. The tendency for repression was assessed according to the typology in which low levels of anxiety accompanied by high levels of social desirability is considered as a repressive coping style. The results obtained in the study proved that hypersexual men in comparison to the general population, presented significantly higher levels of anxiety. While coping with stress, men suffering from compulsive sexual behaviors had a high tendency toward instrumental support, venting, religion, and emotional support. The social desirability levels and a tendency toward repression were lower in hypersexual patients in comparison to respondents from the general population. The results obtained in the study might serve as a starting point for planning directed therapeutic interventions for hypersexual patients. It should be emphasized at the same time that the obtained results are only preliminary, and other studies in the area of compulsive sexual behaviors are needed.

**Keywords:** *Hypersexuality, anxiety, social desirability, coping with stress, repression.*

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## FOSTERING THERAPEUTIC ALLIANCE AND LONG-TERM BENEFITS THROUGH VIRTUAL COLLABORATION IN VRET

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### Abstract

Within the last decade, immersive virtual reality (iVR) has emerged as a transformative technology in the fields of psychology and psychotherapy, offering promising avenues for novel therapeutic approaches. The increasing demand for psychotherapeutic services and innovative methods to facilitate and enrich psychotherapeutic processes has underscored the unique potential of iVR such as accessibility, scalability, easy creation, and dynamic modification of the virtual content customization and safety. This paper explores the integration of collaborative immersive virtual environments (CIVEs) within Virtual Reality Exposure Therapy (VRET), aiming to extend the application of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) techniques. Our investigation not only refines VRET as a contemporary CBT tool but places significant emphasis on the crucial role of therapeutic alliances and the enduring impact of successful interventions. Central to our discussion is the idea that CIVEs should facilitate meaningful interactions between therapists and clients in an immersive virtual realm, which we also attempt to support with our past and follow-up research. Beyond the conventional boundaries of VRET, our perspective advocates for expanding collaborative efforts to encompass traditional CBT sessions conducted within iVR. This deliberate expansion of virtual therapeutic involvement seeks to overcome geographical limitations that align with the evolving landscape of remote therapy while preserving the essential components of established therapeutic methods. We introduce a framework that not only embraces technological progress but also underscores the importance of cultivating strong therapeutic connections, thereby contributing to lasting treatment success.

**Keywords:** *iVR, CIVE, virtual reality, psychotherapy, cognitive-behavioral therapy.*

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## URBANIZATION AND MENTAL HEALTH - A CROSS-SECTIONAL NETWORK ANALYSIS WITH A REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE

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### Abstract

With increasing urbanization, more people are exposed to mental health risk factors stemming from the urban social or physical environment. However, research on the relationship between urbanization and mental health is lacking. This cross-sectional study aimed to explore the relationships of the physical environment (spatial cohesion and urban environment) and social factors (neighborhood cohesion) with mental health (stress, anxiety and depression symptoms) and physical health and the mediating role of loneliness based on the proposed theoretical model.

The study was conducted in Metropolis GZM (Silesia, Poland) with 3,296 residents (48% women). The methods used were the PSS-10, GAD-7, PHQ-9, R-UCLA3 and neighborhood cohesion scale.

ANOVA results showed that city residents had better mental health indices than residents of villages and small towns. However, the network approach revealed that although urbanization was the most influential node, it was not directly related to mental health. The model was confirmed and showed that the relationships between the physical environment and mental health were consecutively mediated by neighborhood cohesion and loneliness. Spatial cohesion related to factors of the physical environment and social cohesion, while physical health was directly connected to sociodemographic factors and loneliness. Mental health can be improved by social and architectural factors, such as strengthening neighborhood cohesion, particularly in blocks of flats, and improving neglected buildings.

The costs of conducting this research were co-financed by the Metropolis GZM under the "Metropolitan Science Support Fund" program in 2022-202 within the granted project "Challenges of the Public Space and Social Cohesion of the Metropolis GZM in Poland - An interdisciplinary approach" no 4/2023/2.

**Keywords:** *Urbanization, depression, anxiety, loneliness, neighborhood cohesion*

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## HEALING THROUGH MIRRORING THE OTHER: A SINGLE CASE ON SHARING VULNERABILITY IN THE THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP

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### Abstract

Research in psychotherapy has tried to identify which elements favor and hinder the therapeutic alliance. However, few studies have analyzed how these processes come into play when patients and therapists share the same psychological vulnerability factors. The innovation of this contribution is twofold: 1. For the first time, patient and therapist expose, in a single work, their point of view in moments of impasse regarding their respective roles in the relationship and the emotions and tendencies to action activated by each other; 2. The Cognitive Model of Pathological Affective Dependencies (Pugliese et al., 2023), which focuses on the frustration of basic needs as an antecedent for traumatic relationships, is first applied to therapeutic alliance breakdowns. In relational trauma, there are feelings of distrust, a perception of the world as dangerous and unpredictable, and, concerning others, a belief in unlovability prevails. While the therapeutic relationship provides the basis for processing traumatic experiences through a new relational experience, it is the patient's compromised capacity for trust that makes it difficult to achieve stability. The feeling of powerlessness and helplessness underlying the trauma leads the relationship to oscillate between needs for closeness and distance, triggering an emotional spiral that leads to the interruption of emotional expressiveness, communication, and intimacy. Through a single case, we illustrate the complexity that the therapeutic relationship assumes when it is embedded in a disabling interpersonal cycle in which the patient feels drawn to destroy the therapist's image, even though she feels the need for the relationship and the pain resulting from its loss. The need for security and attachment, coupled with the terrifying fear of losing the other, activates attempts at a solution based on control and the use of power that will constitute the leading cause of the break of the bond and the primary factor in maintaining a long impasse in the therapeutic process, leading to a collapse of metacognition and confusion of roles. The therapeutic setting takes the form of a courtroom in which the patient and therapist remain for a long time trying, through their clinical expertise, to find answers to a single question: Who is the abuser, and who is the victim? This contribution allows careful analysis of interpersonal cycles in relational trauma through an integrated clinical reading of the patient and therapist, supporting the progress of research in psychotherapy aimed at developing increasingly precise strategies to ensure effectiveness.

**Keywords:** *Adverse childhood experiences, relational trauma, therapeutic relationship, vulnerability factors.*

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## THE MEANINGFULNESS OF LIFE: ITS ASSESSMENT AND NATURE

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### Abstract

The paper deals with Meaningfulness of Life (MOL), presenting the definition of the construct, its theoretical and methodological background and its importance. The first part (sections 1.-5.) is devoted to describing a new tool for the assessment of MOL and the relation of its total score to different kinds of instructions, the overall evaluation of one's MOL, quality of life, personality traits, cognitive processes and health. Scores representing four categories of MOL were correlated with age, gender, occupation, and specific personality traits. The second part section 6) is devoted to describing a study of MOL in cancer patients focused on the issue whether MOL in cancer patients is a function of depression.

**Keywords:** *Meaningfulness of Life, assessment, personality, cognition, cancer.*

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## THE PHQ-9 AND GAD-7 DEPRESSIVE AND ANXIETY MULTIPURPOSE MEASURES: EXPLORING GENDER DIFFERENCES AND CLINICAL UTILITY REGARDING PSYCHOLOGICAL FLEXIBILITY

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### Abstract

*Background:* The rising global prevalence of depressive and anxiety symptoms underscores the urgent need to update and refine the tools used for screening, diagnosing, and monitoring these conditions. The Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9; Kroenke et al., 2001) includes nine items corresponding to each symptom of major depressive disorder as outlined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition (DSM-IV). The General Anxiety Disorder 7-item (GAD-7; Spitzer et al., 2006) includes seven items, with three addressing the core criteria A and B from the DSM-IV and the remaining four derived from existing anxiety scales. To further enhance the clinical understanding of these disorders, the examination of specific depressive and anxiety symptoms in relation to pillars of psychological flexibility, namely openness to experience, behavioural awareness, and valued action (Francis et al., 2016), was undertaken. This approach should strengthen intervention planning by providing deeper insights into psychological flexibility as a protective factor that could alleviate some symptoms. *Method:* In total, 1,143 participants (291 men, 830 women, and 22 with other gender identities) completed an online questionnaire package that included the PHQ-9, GAD-7, and CompACT. Cut-off scores for the PHQ-9 and GAD-7 were used to categorize participants. *Results:* Chi-square tests of independence indicated that more men than women (36.5% vs. 27.9%) reported minimal depressive symptoms; more women reported mild depressive symptoms than men (28.5% vs. 22.2%). Similarly, a higher proportion of men reported minimal anxiety symptoms (41.4% vs. 27.4%), and more women experienced severe anxiety symptoms (20.7% vs. 7.6%). Two one-way ANOVAs revealed disproportionate levels of psychological flexibility across different PHQ-9 severity levels; interestingly, there were no differences according to the GAD-7 categorization. Furthermore, when controlling for gender in multiple hierarchical regression analyses, depressive and anxiety symptoms emerged as significant predictors of psychological flexibility pillars. Specifically, depressive symptoms related to changes in weight and appetite, fatigue, feelings of worthlessness or guilt, and anxiety symptoms like excessive worry, fear of anticipated events, and irritability were especially influential. *Conclusion:* Various depressive and anxiety symptoms demonstrated predictive relationships with different pillars of psychological flexibility, highlighting the nuanced associations between specific symptoms and aspects of adaptive coping strategies. Interventions that focus on enhancing psychological flexibility pillars (e.g., acceptance and commitment therapy) should be able to target specific depressive and anxiety symptoms.

**Keywords:** *Depressive symptoms, anxiety symptoms, psychological flexibility, gender.*

## QUALITY OF LIFE IN AGING: A SURVEY FOR CO-LIVING

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### Abstract

Aging populations are faced with increasing challenges. The idea is to live well and be serene throughout retirement. Financial constraints add to the burden in today's society. Post-COVID additional stresses have been identified. In our study we aimed at uncovering characteristics for the creation of a survey to identify seniors with suitable characteristics for co-living arrangements. In this research we look at retired independent women living in the government subsidized rental co-living building in Paris in order to establish desirable criteria to adopt or adapt the formula in Canada. At present there are no such arrangements that have lasted, despite some examples of friends living together. As well, retirement homes are costly and often do not meet the needs of more independent people. Living alone in aging has also become fraught with issues. Studies have shown that people living together while also keeping independent enjoy longer healthier lives. For this qualitative study, the first step was to have members of a successful co-living model make regular journal entries for six months so as to identify desirable traits and attitudes through their ways of being and doing. The journals were analyzed along with data found in the public domain on the group, including the House Charter each member had to sign and abide by.

Identified categories were grouped into themes. Following that we searched established well-being surveys to tease out corresponding questions to the items we had uncovered. We then created a questionnaire with a 5-point Likert. This questionnaire is presented under a format with radio buttons. The final questionnaire includes 33 theme sections with various numbers of questions under each section going from one to 17 for autonomy. The autonomy section as the most important one is further subdivided into four sections. The themes will be explored and discussed in light of our findings and their relevance. Further steps will be presented as well as suggestions for further research.

**Keywords:** *Themes for well-being, question items, seniors co-housing.*

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## **CLINICAL INTERVENTIONS FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS IN PUBLIC MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN BRAZIL**

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### **Abstract**

In recent decades, Brazilian legislation relating to public mental health care for children and adolescents has changed radically and resulted in the establishment of Child and Adolescent Psychosocial Care Centers. This is one of the possible devices for offering care to children and young people. It must be part of a broad care network with intersectoral actions linked to other services and also including the school, assistance, legal, cultural sectors, etc. The logic of psychosocial care is what subsidizes the work, privileging actions in the territory. Actions must be expanded, involving caring, welcoming, listening, enabling emancipatory actions and enhancing the quality of life of users who must be considered in their singularity. Which is opposed to the strict meaning of “treatment”. As these services are relatively new, there is a need to provide theoretical support that could contribute to their establishment. Which justifies carrying out this study. The present work aims to present D. W. Winnicott's theory that can be useful for thinking about care in mental health services aimed at this public. It is noteworthy that the author built his theoretical framework based on his experiences in pediatric, psychoanalytic and social assistance clinics. The theory of the maturational process developed by Winnicott is based on the idea that there is a tendency towards development that is innate and inherited. This conception opens up the possibility of understanding development advances and possible problems in this process. Environmental provision provides the conditions for the course of the maturational process to continue. The mental health service can function as a place (placement), an environment capable of producing transformations in the subjects' experience of self through sophisticated forms of care, such as holding, handling, presentation of objects, potential space, the conception of play, when provided by a team of professionals. Such concepts will support the way of planning clinical interventions in services, which are closer to non-verbal communication and articulated with the time of subjectivity. They take place in potential space, so that there can be a symbolization of psychic needs. The intervention is built in the encounter, in the interplay of the subjectivity of the professional and the child and young person. It allows the professional to use different means of expression, not only to understand the patient's communication, but also to transmit it, using the same expressive and plastic language.

**Keywords:** *Child mental health, mental health services, child, adolescent.*

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## **LIFE ON HOLD – LIVING WITH AMBIGUOUS LOSS**

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### **Abstract**

The study is first part of larger mixed method study, and aims at preliminary exploration of the subjective experiences of ambiguous loss in case of individuals whose family members have gone missing due to armed conflict. Thirty adults who met inclusion criteria were recruited based on random/available sampling procedures, and life stories were recorded via semi-structured in-depth life story interview. 390 stories (13 per person) were coded for narrative structure, autobiographical reasoning, generativity and motives. As data revealed, search for meaning in loss as well as in staying alive is one of the recurrent themes in the narratives of research participants. Only part of the sample was capable to construct their life stories in redemption manner – turning to autobiographical elaboration of the loss experience and extracting lessons/insights and growing out of adversity. The sample was quite low on generativity and only small portion of respondents, who did tell generative stories, mainly focused on their own family members, children/grandchildren, and afterwards on their community. As for autobiographical reasoning and finding meaning in disappearance and in life in general, most of the sample was quite low. Motivational themes of power and intimacy were presented in most of the stories told by research participants, however, motives of intimacy and close relationships prevailed in the majority of the stories whilst agency showed up in stories told as high points. Regardless hardship and pain lived by respondents, there were no stories of rejection and disillusion in human beings.

**Keywords:** *Ambiguous loss, narrative identity, meaning, generativity, motives.*

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## **MEANING MAKING AFTER MALPRACTICE COMPLAINTS AGAINST PSYCHOLOGISTS: LOSING THE BATTLE, WINNING THE WAR**

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### **Abstract**

A career in psychology can in general be seen as very rewarding and meaningful. However, working as a psychologist in a Third World country such as South Africa, poses its own unique challenges. There is a severe shortage of psychologists in South Africa (2.75 psychologists per 100 000 individuals). This places a severe burden on psychologists to provide services. Besides excessive workloads, psychologists also experience severe stress due to managing clients, attending to administrative procedures, balancing work-home life and financial concerns. An additional stressor, namely a malpractice complaint, increases the risk of distress and possible impairment within the psychologist. The aim of this research was therefore to determine how psychologists who experienced an adverse event such as a malpractice complaint made meaning thereof. Meaning making can be defined as the process of coming to an understanding of how events in one's life fit together, how to adjust to adverse events and to integrate challenges about oneself, others, one's world and to find equilibrium. A qualitative design was followed where semi-structured interviews were conducted and the results analysed and interpreted from an interpretive phenomenological perspective. The results indicated that the group of psychologists who participated (n=10) in this research were able to experience meaning making despite the traumatic impact of such a complaint. Three themes emerged: The participants experienced professional and personal growth; meaningful changes were made to risk management; and the complaint contributed to integration of meaning of life. The research made a positive contribution on theoretical level in terms of meaning making after malpractice complaints, but also on practical level in that the results can be used for therapeutic and professional guidance and intervention in order to re-establish psychological well-being after an adverse event.

**Keywords:** *Professional complaints, ethics, meaning making.*

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## **EXPLORING THE S.P.A.C.E. STRATEGY: THRIVING THROUGH LIFE'S CHALLENGES**

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### **Abstract**

Resilience, the ability to bounce back from adversity, is a well-known concept, but beyond it lies the idea of antifragility, wherein individuals thrive and grow stronger when faced with challenges (Taleb, 2012). Drawing on Taleb's notion of antifragility, Chérif and Wood (2022) introduced the S.P.A.C.E. strategy, a five-step approach integrating character strengths and mindfulness. Research shows that leveraging character strengths enhances well-being, organizational effectiveness, and resilience, particularly during crises (Niemiec, 2020). Mindfulness, with its focus on attention regulation and acceptance, complements character strengths, enhancing resilience and well-being. Studies suggest a synergistic relationship between mindfulness and character strengths, contributing to personal growth and resilience (Niemiec, 2019).

The S.P.A.C.E. strategy involves five steps: Stop, Practice tactical breathing, Acknowledge affects, behaviours, and cognition, Call on Character Strengths, and Empower Yourself. By mindfully creating mental space, practising breathing techniques, acknowledging emotions, actions, and thoughts, utilizing character strengths, and adopting a goal-oriented mindset, individuals can navigate challenges effectively and promote personal growth.

In this presentation, we explore how the S.P.A.C.E. strategy can empower individuals to thrive through life's challenges. Through an analysis of the potential application of the S.P.A.C.E. strategy, we shed light on its practical implementation in real-life scenarios, emphasizing its relevance in navigating life's challenges effectively.

**Keywords:** *Antifragility, resilience, character strengths, mindfulness.*

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## EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

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### EPISTEMOLOGICAL FRAMING IN STATISTICS COURSES FOR PSYCHOLOGY STUDENTS

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#### **Abstract**

As psychology grows in popularity, most students select professions related to therapy, which constantly deem statistics courses as irrelevant and accentuate negative attitudes. This study explored perspectives of knowledge, known as epistemological frames, that students enrolled in a psychology-based course in statistics generate and the extent to which these relate to attitudes, thus leading to three research questions: What are the range of attitudes from students enrolled in a psychology-based course in statistics and would these vary among instructors? What type of epistemological frames do students enrolled in a psychology-based statistics course generate? How do epistemological frames relate to course attitudes? This mixed-methods study gathered data from students enrolled in an introduction to statistics course in different institutions to evaluate attitude ranges and chose nine students for a qualitative analysis on their epistemological frames. The results evidence similarity in attitudes toward statistics, regardless of the instructor teaching the course or the institution where the course was offered. Furthermore, the qualitative analysis evidence the existence of productive and unproductive frames which significantly relate to positive, neutral and negative attitudes. This study should encourage every statistics professor to question not only if the delivery of material is effective to generate knowledge, but if this knowledge transitions to the construction of productive epistemological frames that can foster positive attitudes as this course is useful for every psychology student, regardless of the specialization area.

***Keywords:** Epistemological framing, student attitudes, psychology education.*

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### CLINGING TO THE DREAM: PREDICTING PERSISTENCE AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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#### **Abstract**

For young adults who are the first in their families to attend college (“first-generation college students”), earning a college degree is not only an exciting dream but also a practical path to upward mobility. These students face numerous challenges that impact their motivation and intent to persist towards their degrees, and institutions of higher education would benefit from identifying the variables that promote or discourage persistence. A survey on college persistence was conducted at a Southern California university serving a majority of first-generation college students. A total of 578 students (women = 69%, first-generation students = 63%) between the ages of 18 and 51 years (mean age = 18.9) responded to the online survey assessing persistence, academic and social burden, social support, instructor support, sense of belonging, and academic self-efficacy. Regression models with persistence as the primary outcome were tested for first-generation and non-first-generation respondents. Results revealed that for first-generation students, sense of belonging was the strongest predictor of persistence, while instructor support and academic self-efficacy were also significant predictors in the model; together, the variables explained 21% of the variance in persistence. For non-first-generation students, academic self-efficacy was the strongest predictor, with sense of belonging also being a significant predictor in the model; together, the variables explained 24% of the variance of persistence. These findings will be discussed in the context implications for pedagogy as well as institutional policies.

***Keywords:** College students, academic persistence, academic self-efficacy, sense of belonging.*

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## TOWARDS FAIR AND RESPONSIBLE AI: A STUDY USING SWOT AND FOUR-COMPONENT MODEL TO ANALYSE ETHICAL AI IN EDUCATION

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### Abstract

Some suggest that generative AI tools like ChatGPT can improve student learning, and therefore, educators should modify their teaching and assessment methods to accommodate the new reality of AI's widespread availability (Sullivan, Kelly, & McLaughlan, 2023), others suggest that certain universities have implemented bans on the usage of ChatGPT, leading some academics to view such tools as a "threat" and a "plague on education" (Sawahel, 2023). This study provides one of the first investigations using a SWOT analysis (Benzaghta, Elwalda, & Mousa, 2021) and the Four-Component model in decision-making (Rest, 1986) into how AI, or in this case, particularly ChatGPT or similar AI tools, are disrupting higher education. The focus areas guiding this analysis are to explore the perception of students and lecturers regarding the use of ChatGPT or similar tools as an AI assistant and ii) how students and lecturers perceive the ethical components when using these tools. The respondents were bachelor's and master's level students and lecturers from the Technical University Amberg-Weiden, Germany. The validity of the data was measured against standard quality criteria for quantitative data using SPSS. Depending on the two scenarios presented whether to "accept" AI with certain ethics and guidelines or to "ban" it, knowing that it is counted as cheating (Intelligent, 2023) or risk of increased plagiarism (Koutsoftas, 2023) this paper explores how to deal with the use of ChatGPT or similar AI tools in the future. Considering both points of view, guidelines should be introduced clarifying how AI tools can be integrated into education following certain ethics. Similarly, communicating the necessity for change to the university leadership is needed; also, lecturers should come up with methods of teaching not avoiding AI but using AI as an assistant to learning processes within ethical constraints.

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence (AI), ChatGPT, higher education, ethics.

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## FACILITATORS AND BARRIERS IN THE USE OF DIGITAL TOOLS FOR ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES OR TROUBLES

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** Digitalization changes in many ways how we connect to other people and how we live in society. On the one hand, information and communication technologies (ICT) carry a risk of marginalization, especially for people with disabilities or troubles. On the other hand, ICT can mediate the relationship to other people and extend social ties. The study aimed to identify the psychological barriers and facilitators to the use of ICT by adolescents and young adults with disabilities or troubles. **Methods:** 9 adolescents and young adults (44% men, Mage=17.1 years; SD=2.3) were recruited in Educational and Medical Institute and Medical-Psycho-Pedagogical Centres. Semi-structured interviews were administrated, and a qualitative content analysis was performed using the recommendations of Braun and Clarke (2012). Participants were asked about their use of ICT, how they feel when they use it, what motivates them to use ICT and what kind of difficulties they have to deal with. **Results:** Preliminary results show that the main ICTs used are the telephone (9), computer (9) and tablet (7). The main uses are for entertainment, communication and schooling. Three major themes emerged: *Representation of ICT*, *Perception of available resources* and *Individual and environmental component*. For participants, using ICT makes their everyday life easier and provides moments of pleasure. Then, they note that their curiosity and the autonomy that ICT gives supports their desire to use it. The main difficulty encountered is the lack of competence with ICT. In these situations, participants report feelings of anger, stress, and

frustration. These feelings lead to a drop in self-confidence and self-esteem. Furthermore, the perceived risks of ICT are a hindrance. The main risks mentioned were addiction, inappropriate content, and piracy. *Conclusion:* This study identified both barriers and facilitators associated with the use of ICT by adolescents and young adults with disabilities or troubles. These results show that for them, ICTs are important for their sociability and sense of belonging. It is therefore necessary to support them and facilitate their learning of ICT to encourage their use, so that they feel confident and secure. Interviews show how there are motivated to use ICT. A good support could reduce the barrier and allow them to take full advantage of ICT.

**Keywords:** *Adolescent, disabilities, qualitative study, ICT, troubles.*

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## **EARLY DIAGNOSIS AND INTERVENTION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DYSLEXIA AT THE PRESCHOOL AGE: THE ROLE OF STRESS**

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### **Abstract**

Developmental dyslexia (DD) is a multifactorial, specific learning disorder characterized by various interactions of dysfunctions of biological, neurophysiological, cognitive, and psychomotor factors. In this study the association between the early signs of DD and stress was investigated. Polymorphisms/variants that affect the expression levels of HPA axis related genes - that are involved in the regulation of stress response- were studied along with the mitochondrial DNA copy number (mtDNAcn), a sensitive stress biomarker. 314 children aged 5.0 to 6.0 years were recruited, while 20 preschoolers were identified 'at risk' of dyslexia, along with 10 typically developed preschoolers (control group). From the 'at risk' of DD group 10 individuals underwent a 3-month systematic intervention program. Two screening tests for early identification of DD were administered, while a developmental history and the CBCL 1½-5 form of the Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment (ASEBA) were completed. Buccal DNA was extracted. Genotyping of variants of HPA axis genes was performed along with mtDNAcn estimation before and after the intervention in all participants.

Multivariate analysis was applied between all variables between the three groups. A statistically significant difference was observed between the DD and typically developed group on cognitive, psychomotor, and linguistic factors, along with similar statistically significant difference recorded within the DD group before and after the intervention. Although no statistically significant difference was observed before the intervention in mtDNAcn, after the intervention, a statistically significant difference was observed in the intervention group compared to the other 2 groups. Early dysfunctions in specific factors are revealed in a complex framework of interactions, shaping an early DD phenotype. Stress is considered to play an important role in the early occurrence of DD. Early detection of DD in preschool becomes more urgent as it contributes to the implementation of effective interventions, thereby reducing or preventing multiple negative effects in later school age.

**Keywords:** *Developmental Dyslexia, early identification, early intervention, multifactorial phenotype, stress.*

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## DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF IDENTITY AND ETHNIC SOCIALIZATION PRACTICES OF PARENTS IN SERBIA

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### Abstract

In order to promote multiculturalism and reduce tensions in the multi-ethnic society of the Republic of Serbia, it is important to examine how parents shape their children's ethnic identity. Ethnic identity is a personal, self-categorizing concept in which an individual identifies with an ethnic group and its beliefs, values, and origins. Ethnic socialization is a process of learning about and making meaning out of one's ethnic heritage. The aim of this research is to examine the practices of ethnic socialization and various aspects of identity of parents of different ethnic origins. The sample consisted of 501 parents of high school students (75% women) of different ethnicities living in the territory of the Republic of Serbia. Parents reported their ethnic socialization practices using the 15 items Ethnic Socialization Scale referring to four underlying dimensions of ethnic socialization: Cultural Socialization, Preparation for Bias, Promotion of Mistrust and Pluralism. Belonging to certain groups, as a determinant of identity, was assessed by parents using the Social Identification Scale (SOCID) - a 5-point Likert scale with 9 items, and the groups included: belonging to gender, ethnic belonging, belonging to a religious group, belonging to a family, a group of friends and geographical affiliation such as city/village, Serbia, Balkans and Europe. The parents of Hungarian ethnicity are significantly less supportive of cultural pluralism in practice than parents of Serbian ethnicity and parents from Bosniak-Serb families, and that they are significantly less supportive of cultural pluralism than parents from mixed Bosniak-Serb families. Parents from mixed Bosniak-Serb families prepare their children for potential discrimination on the basis of ethnicity to a greater extent than parents of Serbian ethnicity and parents from mixed Hungarian-Serb families. A fostering mistrust towards members of other ethnic groups, the greatest difference was found between parents of Hungarian and Serbian ethnicity, who do so to a significantly lesser extent. Parents from mixed Bosniak-Serb families are more concerned with the ethnic socialization of their children than parents of Serbian ethnicity and parents from mixed Hungarian-Serb families. In general, parents identify most with family and friend groups, and when it comes to differences between ethnic groups, parents from mixed Bosniak-Serb families identify to a greater extent with their ethnic group than Hungarian-Serb families, and significantly more with Europe in relation to the Serbs, as the dominant ethnic group. The highest positive correlation was obtained between the practice of preparing for discrimination and identification with one's own ethnic group.

**Keywords:** *Ethnic socialization, identity, parents, secondary school students.*

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## SCHOOL CLIMATE – TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE

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### Abstract

Multiple studies have suggested the importance of school climate in relation to various educational outcomes. Simultaneously, school climate is the indicator of the quality of school work, which is assessed during school self-evaluation and external evaluation. As teachers play a central role in shaping a positive school environment, this study aimed to explore their viewpoints and assess the extent to which the perception of school climate varies based on specific personal factors, including gender, ethnic background, professional experience and development. Participants were 385 teachers (Mage = 47.5; 66.5% female; 63.6% identified as Serbian (ethnic majority), 10.3% as ethnic minority, 11.4% as mixed ethnic background) from 19 secondary schools. In order to capture school climate as a multidimensional construct we used the Delaware School Climate Scale (DSCS) which consist of 9 subscales Teacher–Student Relations, Student–Student Relations, Clarity of Expectations, Fairness of Rules, School Safety, Student Engagement, Bullying, Teacher-Home Communications and Staff Relation. Teachers assessed each aspect of school climate on a 4-point Likert type scale. For determining personal variables a

multiple-choice question was used. Beside descriptive statistics, t-test (for gender differences) and a one-way ANOVA was applied for comparing different groups of participants. Results show that teachers perceived overall school climate as relatively satisfactory ( $M = 3.2$ ,  $SD = .42$ ). The most positively rated aspect of school climate was teacher-student relation ( $M = 3.5$ ,  $SD = .44$ ), while the most negatively rated aspect was bullying ( $M = 1.9$ ,  $SD = .60$ ). Female teachers perceived student-student relation, school safety and student engagement more positively than male teachers. Additionally, novice teachers perceived teacher-student relation and staff relation more positively compared to highly experienced teachers, while experienced teachers perceived the presence of bullying to a greater extent. Teachers who received more professional training had higher scores on Bullying and lower scores on Expectations subscales. Serbian teachers had lower scores on Student engagement subscale than teachers of minority and mixed backgrounds. These results are relevant for school improvement and indicate that schools need to devote greater attention to important areas of school climate, including student-student relations, engagements and prevention of bullying.

**Keywords:** *School climate, teachers, professional experience, professional development, ethnicity.*

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## **STUDY OF THE NATURE OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS AND THEIR VOCATIONAL IDENTITY, IN THE EXPRESSION OF THEIR ORIENTATION CHOICES, ACCORDING TO SEN'S CAPABILITIES THEORY**

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### **Abstract**

In 2023, 88% of new French students said they felt free to formulate their preferences for their first year at university. However, 34,9% of students manage to complete their bachelor's degree in more than 3 years (EESR n°16). Reorientation at the end of the first year therefore remains important.

The originality of our work lies in the simultaneous study of the individual's environment and internal resources, considering data such as parental involvement, compared with that of teachers and psychologists.

Our research is part of the PIA (Plan Investissement Avenir) Ile-de-France program and focuses both on young people's psychological capacity to make a career choice, and on their perception of their environment as helping them to make that choice. To do this, our work is based on the capability approach: Sen (1992) builds his theory from a systemic perspective to understand the ability to choose (capability) in a favorable or unfavorable environment (enabling or disabling). Consequently, true freedom would consist in having sufficient environmental resources (family, school, institutional support, etc.), which psychological resources could convert into the ability to choose (Fernagu, 2022). Our aim is twofold: on the one hand, to gain a better understanding of high school students' perceptions of what they themselves recognize as the favorable environment (person, institution, etc.) for their choice of orientation. On the other hand, to explore, at the same time, their professional identities (Lannegrand-Willems and Perchec, 2017) in order to understand how guidance is as much a collective issue as an individual one.

Our qualitative study is based on a crossed methodology: a thematic analysis was carried out on semi-directive interviews from 3 focus groups of high school students (6 girls, 7 boys). This analysis was cross-referenced with a lexicometric analysis of textual corpora. Among our findings, students perceive the actions of their enabling environments through individuals. Indeed, teachers, Psychologues de l'Éducation Nationale (PsyEN) and parents provide support that is perceived differently depending on whether it falls under "support" (Chen and Solberg, 2018), such as teachers and fathers. When it comes to mothers and PsyENs, it appears more as a form of care ("caring"). Finally, while support is presented as an aid to making a choice, our cross-analyses highlight the act of renouncing other possible options ((by graphe of the word): this act would be done by the young person, without support or in a truly conscious manner.

**Keywords:** *Enabling environment, vocational identity, capabilities.*

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## RESULTS FROM YEAR TWO OF A BRAIN DEVELOPMENT UNIT WITH PRESERVICE TEACHERS

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### Abstract

An accurate understanding of brain development enhances teachers' understanding of how their students learn. Therefore, researchers collaborated to provide accurate information concerning brain development to preservice teachers. This study addresses neuromyths and general brain development misconceptions that were found to be persistent in a study conducted the previous year (Morrissey & Northcutt, 2023). Year two sample consisted of a different cohort of 12 teacher candidates than the year one cohort. Researchers addressed neuromyths and misconceptions with a unit on brain development that included inviting a neuroscientist into the preservice classroom to share accurate knowledge about brain development at different stages throughout K-12 schooling, with an emphasis on brain development knowledge on which the year one cohort scored low. In addition to assignments and activities from the previous year, pre-service teachers read an additional article about learning styles and read a collection of abstracts about the effects of sugar. Preservice teachers were given a pre-test, post-test, and end-of-semester test, and asked to journal about "What did you learn that surprised you? How will you use the information from today to understand students?" following the presentation by the neuroscientist. Data were analyzed to determine which neuromyths and misconceptions were persistent right after the brain development unit ended (during week 5 of a 16-week semester) and at the end of the semester. Because of the small sample size, data were analyzed qualitatively. Pre-, post- and end-of-semester-assessment results were compared. Responses to the discussion post were used to provide consistency and depth to results from the post-assessment (Krathwohl, 2009). Researchers saw improvements in areas that were emphasized more in year two. However, misconceptions continued to be apparent around whether the use of learning styles in the classroom were useful in improving student outcomes, and whether children must acquire a native language before learning a second language.

**Keywords:** *Educational psychology, teacher education, neuromyths, brain development.*

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## COLLEGE STUDENT RESILIENCE AND ADAPTABILITY POST-COVID

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### Abstract

Assessing college student resilience and adaptability is of paramount importance due to the role these factors play in mental health, and as we seek to understand the psychosocial impact of isolation during Covid on young people's psychological and relational development. A sample of college freshmen (n = 99) at a medium-sized private university in the US participated in a survey on adaptability, life satisfaction, and resilience.

The findings highlight insights into the psychosocial functioning of college freshmen. Significantly, the results demonstrate significant variability in life satisfaction, measured with the Satisfaction with Life Scale (M = 19.65, SD = 7.09) and resilience, measured with the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (M = 83.76, SD = 15.16) among college freshmen. The low mean on adaptability subscale on managing uncertainty suggests areas of potential vulnerability on these self-reported domains.

Interestingly, the survey encountered issues with the adaptability subscale of self-efficacy, revealing an unexpectedly low mean score (M = 3.62) and a narrow score distribution, indicating potential anomalies in data collection or limitations in this aspect of the survey instrument among this demographic. Nonetheless, this low mean should not be ignored and further exploration of interactions between low-self efficacy, resilience, and life satisfaction need to be explored.

Overall, these data suggest that fostering positive intrapersonal dynamics and resilience during the vulnerable time of the transition to college life is needed, and that interventions tailored to bolster resilience in this population could be informed by theories of behavior change by including support for students' self-efficacy.

**Keywords:** *Resilience, college, life satisfaction, self-efficacy.*

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## TEACHER'S PERCEPTIONS OF THE USEFULNESS OF BOARD GAMES IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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### Abstract

Playing games at school can have a positive impact, particularly regarding student's motivation and learning efficiency. Various types of games are employed by teachers, including board games. Board games are defined as games with limited playing time, simple themes, and rules. They require a physical medium (e.g., a board, cards, dice), and are played by two or more players. While the educational value of games is widely recognized in the literature, few studies have delved into elementary school teachers' perceptions regarding playing board games at school, even though they are the ones encouraged to use them. The aim of this study is to address the following research questions: According to elementary school teachers, what's the interest of board games in the school context? Why elementary school teachers use (or don't use) board games in their class? In order to better understand teachers' perceived usefulness of board games in the school context, we conducted 3 focus groups (with three to five participants per group, 13 participants in all) with elementary school teachers teaching from first grade to fifth grade. The results of the thematic analysis conducted on Nvivo highlighted three relevant themes regarding our research questions: (1) Board games for academic learning, (2) Board games for emotions, social life, and coexistence and (3) Teachers' motivation, roles and rights. Indeed, teachers believe that the use of board games, as suggested by scientific literature, can benefit student learning (e.g., language, mathematics, geography...) but teachers believe that board games can also be an interesting tool from a social and emotional perspective, both for students and teachers. While studies on games in school often focus on children, this research provides insight into teachers' perceptions on board games in elementary school. Exploring teachers' perceptions of board games may help us better understand why board games are or are not used in the school context.

**Keywords:** Board games, elementary school teachers, focus groups, perceptions.

## MOTIVATING ADOLESCENT STUDENTS IN STEM

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### Abstract

High school students (N=500) across the United States have participated in a summer program designed to pique adolescents' interest and motivation in STEM content areas by connecting classroom engineering challenges with industry and workplace opportunities. In addition to content knowledge and skills we are measuring and tracking adolescents' interest, motivation, social skills, courage, personal responsibility, and other 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. Through pre and post assessments, surveys, daily journal logs, and student interviews we have documented gains and improvements across three different STEM curriculum – STEM on the Ground (Advanced Manufacturing), STEM in the Water (Maritime), and STEM in the Air (Aviation). Summer 2023, students completed the STEM on the Ground curriculum applying STEM concepts of simple and complex machines, gear ratios, inverse relationships, and the engineering design process during their team design challenges.

Pre and post assessments (N=500) results indicated statistically significant gains in STEM content knowledge overall, with gains in mathematics and science being greatest. Based on the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data collected across all sites, the 2023 STEM Leadership Academy participants gained skills in teamwork, leadership, communication, and other 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce skills and experienced growth in social skills, courage, and personal responsibility. Students also made gains in mathematics, science, and engineering knowledge and in experience in working with technology, which increases the likelihood they will succeed in STEM courses and careers. And adolescents' awareness,

interest, and motivation in local STEM career opportunities increased as did their confidence in being able to enter a STEM career field.

This STEM Leadership Academy is being scaled across 10 locations, adding new school districts and sites each year. This presentation will share data collected from high school students over the past nine years in Alabama, Georgia, and California and share plans for continued replication and scale-up in Colorado, Florida, Pennsylvania, Texas over the next two years focused on students' motivation in STEM.

The JROTC STEM Leadership Academy scale up program is funded by the U.S. Department of Defense STEM initiative (Award Number HQ0034210009).

**Keywords:** *Motivation, learning, technology, social development, adolescence.*

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## SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

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### PERCEPTIONS OF INCLUSION PROFESSIONALS ON EMPLOYABILITY OF INDIVIDUALS WITH INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES: A TRANSNATIONAL STUDY

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#### **Abstract**

Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) face significant employment barriers, driven by societal biases, a lack of recognition of their abilities, and inadequate institutional policies. Addressing this requires transforming training professionals and the education system to embrace inclusive and adaptive practices. This transnational study aims to explore the perceptions of professionals in the field of inclusion of people with IDD about employability, investigating three specific aspects: (a) the pedagogical needs of trainers in this field; (b) reasonable accommodation as a structuring factor for a more inclusive world of work; and (c) the assessment and monitoring models in the labour context for people with IDD. With these objectives in mind, 43 professionals working daily with people with IDD in Italy, Portugal, Sweden and Türkiye were surveyed using an online questionnaire, with a set of multiple-choice questions based on previous comprehensive research on the employability of individuals with IDD. The obtained results highlight the importance of social skills and interpersonal communication in vocational training for individuals with IDD, particularly in Türkiye, while also noting Sweden's focus on problem-solving skills and Italy's emphasis on adaptive and self-care skills. The research reveals a preference for adaptive and personalized learning plans, especially in Portugal, Italy, and Sweden, indicating a shift towards customized educational strategies for learners with IDD. Furthermore, the study underscores the challenges in workplace accommodation due to a lack of employer awareness and the need for targeted training in countries like Türkiye, Italy, and Portugal, advocating for a broader adoption of assistive technologies to foster inclusive work and learning environments.

**Keywords:** *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, employment barriers, social inclusion, professional perceptions, reasonable accommodations.*

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### UNLOCKING IDENTITY: AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MEMORIES STRENGTHEN IDENTITY IN MATURE ADULTS

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#### **Abstract**

Previous research demonstrates a link between identity and the recollection of past experiences. The current research investigates the differing role that recollecting past experiences may have on identity depending upon the age of the participants. In a set of five studies, six hundred undergraduate students and 450 Prolific workers completed one of the following tasks: list self-describing adjectives, list previous significant life events, or complete a control task. After the task, all participants completed measures of self-continuity and identity. Mature adults (those 25 and older) displayed a stronger sense of identity after recalling previous experiences; however, contrary to current theories, recollecting previous experiences had no significant impact on the strength of identity for the younger sample (those under 25). These results highlight the essential and often overlooked role of age in the relationship between a person's past and their sense of identity.

**Keywords:** *Identity, autobiographical memory, emerging adulthood.*

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## **DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT TO REDUCE STEREOTYPES AND DISCRIMINATION IN SOCIETY**

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### **Abstract**

Globalization, increasing mobility and migration, and the entry of new generations into the labour market have made the modern work environment very diverse, different people have to live together and cooperate in it. The working environment in Latvia is also significantly affected by demographic changes (the “ageing” of society), which in the near future may have a negative impact on companies' chances of finding and attracting labor. It should be mentioned that in Latvia members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (hereinafter - LGBTQ+) communities are avoided or not talked about at all. This topic is still considered a taboo not only in Latvia but also in many parts of the world (especially in the eastern part of Europe). However, modern society cannot ignore the fact that representatives of these groups exist.

The aim of the study is to investigate the attitude and stereotypes of the working society towards homosexual people in the working environment, thus finding out whether this group of society can feel respected in the working environment.

To achieve the goal of the work and to answer the research questions, the author of the work surveyed the able-bodied part of society on attitudes (which included three scales: emotional, cognitive and behavioural) and stereotypes (one scale) towards homosexual people in the work environment. 252 respondents who were part of the able-bodied population took part in the survey. Analyzing the data, it was concluded that the stereotypes residing in an individual can strengthen both their emotions and behavior. Research data also shows that emotions have the greatest influence on people's stereotypes. The majority (76%) of respondents do not find homosexual people unpleasant, which can be considered a very positive aspect of the work environment.

**Keywords:** *Diversity, attitudes, stereotypes, homosexuality.*

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## **LONGITUDINAL CHANGES IN VOCATIONAL INTERESTS IN MIDDLE ADOLESCENCE**

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### **Abstract**

Numerous studies have examined vocational interests, finding strong cross-cultural equivalence for the Spherical model. This model explains variability in interests toward different work fields, like People versus Things, and Ideas versus Data, as well as interests in occupations with varying educational levels or Prestige. Croatia has a rich history of vocational interest research in early and middle adolescence, with cross-sectional studies suggesting interest structures emerging around age 14. This study adds to the literature by longitudinally investigating vocational interest changes during adolescence. The sample included middle adolescents followed for three years (ages 16, 17, and 18; N=360), using the Croatian version of the Personal Globe Inventory-Short to measure vocational interests. The data confirm the hypothesized hexagonal RIASEC structure across all three time points. Girls scored higher on People-Things and Prestige dimensions, with no gender differences in Data-Ideas. A moderate drop in Prestige dimension was observed, while the other dimensions remained stable. Interest profile elevation remained consistent, with slight decreases in differentiation. Moderation effects were discussed, aligning with theoretical expectations and prior studies, offering implications for career counseling practices.

**Keywords:** *Vocational interests, RIASEC, adolescence, vocational choices, career counseling.*

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## LIFELONG EMPLOYABILITY: DEVELOPING POWER TO ACT IN HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

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### Abstract

Due to technological and demographic challenges and the increasing relevance of new work arrangements, job transitions are becoming more frequent (Bridgstock, 2009), impacting individuals' trajectories and their perceived turning points (Hareven & Masaoka, 1988). It is, therefore, crucial to create conditions in Higher Education (HE) to support all students in promoting autonomy and the power to act concerning their employability throughout their careers. Our aim is to understand how the participation in a structured programme on employability-related issues during HE pathways is reflected in the expansion of students' power to act (Clot, 2008), enabling them to, collectively or individually, gain a greater capability to act on what is important to them, concerning their career path. A b-learning training programme was developed with the aim of developing Bachelor's and Master's students' skills to promote their lifelong employability. By integrating this programme in their curricular plan, the promotion of students' reflection on employability is worked alongside their technical skills, while ensuring that the training programme could be part of the formative path of every student who wishes to do so, by considering the goal of reaching up to 500 students simultaneously. The implementation occurred between October 2021 and July 2023 and an impact questionnaire with a pre and post-test comparison (N=173) allowed us to understand that the training promoted their perception of competence, which facilitated the implementation of a series of actions, thus increasing their power to act. Likewise, the results showed that the students felt prepared to deal with contextual changes, empowering them to rethink the different situations and contexts in which they could act. An impact on collective influence was also found, as they felt more confident to support others, which seems to highlight the promotion of a sense of career community (Lee & Patel, 2019). This study highlights the contribution this programme has made to students' ability to reflect as well as their potential actions in relation to employability and career management to navigate in these uncertain contexts.

**Keywords:** *Lifelong employability, power to act, training, career community.*

## QUALITATIVE STUDY OF BODY IMAGE AND CULTURE AMONG IRANIAN-AMERICANS

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### Abstract

Body image is the perception of individuals of their own body and can be influenced by many factors such as media, culture, and social pressures. Body image in Iranian culture is understudied in scientific literature even though there is an increase of body image dissatisfaction in Middle Eastern communities. Body image dissatisfaction is crucial because it can usher in psychological or physical health problems for individuals. This research studies the influences that impact Iranian-Americans' body image. We ask the question in this study, "What factors influence how larger bodied Iranian-Americans feel about their bodies?" The primary data collection strategies include semi-structured individual interviews with fat Iranian-Americans dealing with fatphobia, negative body image, and exclusion in their society, culture, and the media they consume. Author Sepehr Khosravi has also included an autoethnographic component that incorporates his own experiences as a fat Iranian-American man. Our findings indicate that social expectations around body size common in Iranian culture and expressed by family members and friends can have negative impacts on the mental and physical health of Iranian Americans. At the same time, given their unique position as Iranian-Americans in the diaspora, Western norms and media contexts can provide individuals alternative perspectives, even while still characterized by potential encounters with racism and sizeism.

**Keywords:** *Body image, Iranian-Americans, Iranian culture, fatphobia.*



## **COPING STRATEGIES AS MEDIATORS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HIGH SENSORY PROCESSING SENSITIVITY AND COMPASSION FATIGUE**

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### **Abstract**

Highly sensitive people have stronger reactions to environmental stimuli (Aron & Aron, 1997) which can be experienced as a source of stress. They are more vulnerable to burnout (Bordarie & Mourtialon, 2023) and compassion fatigue (Pérez-Chacón et al., 2021), as are healthcare workers, a category of professionals particularly at risk. However, in response to anxiety-provoking situations, professionals can implement coping strategies to (attempt to) reduce the distress they cause. Coping can be defined as “evolving cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and internal demands that are perceived to tax or exceed the person's resources” (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 141). Problem-focused coping promotes greater satisfaction and can reduce burnout (Meyerson et al., 2020). Conversely, emotion-focused coping is correlated with higher levels of burnout (Gangloff & Malleh, 2017). The aim here is to study the relationship between sensory processing sensitivity, compassion fatigue and coping strategies among speech-language therapists, who are rarely the subject of scientific studies (Brito-Marcelino, 2020). The study involved interviewing 602 female speech-language therapists. They answered a questionnaire composed of French versions of three scales: the Highly Sensitive Person Scale (Bordarie et al., 2022), the Professional Quality of Life Scale (Stamm, 2009) and the Ways of Coping Checklist Revised (Cousson-Gélie et al., 1996). Linear regressions and a mediation analysis were performed with JASP (version 0.17.1). High sensory processing sensitivity increased compassion fatigue ( $p < .001$ ). Emotion-focused strategy increased it as well ( $p < .001$ ). On the contrary, problem-focused coping strategy reduced compassion fatigue ( $p \leq .001$ ). The mediation analysis revealed the influence of sensory processing sensitivity on compassion fatigue disappeared when using problem-focused or social support-focused strategies as mediators but remained significant when using emotion-focused strategy as mediator ( $p < .001$ ). This study is in line with the literature stating that high sensory processing sensitivity is a risk factor of compassion fatigue, as well as emotion-focused coping. More specifically, the relation between sensory processing sensitivity and compassion fatigue can be explained by coping strategies. Highly sensitive speech-language therapists using problem-focused strategy are less likely to express compassion fatigue. There are some possible applications, like to train highly sensitive therapists to develop this kind of strategy since it protects from burnout or compassion fatigue.

**Keywords:** *Sensory processing sensitivity, compassion fatigue, coping strategies, vulnerability, speech-language therapists.*

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## **PASTOR OR MANAGER? YOUNG PRIESTS PLACED INTO A ROLE THEY DID NOT SIGN UP FOR**

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### **Abstract**

The number of young persons attracted to the priesthood in the Roman Catholic church in Europe has been steadily declining over the past few decades. Persons attracted to this role usually view it as a vocation, with the main occupational aspects of the role they are interested in being addressing the pastoral needs of their congregation, both from a spiritual and a personal/social perspective, and their involvement in the rites that are important to them and their faith. The number of persons interested in becoming priests or pastors has been steadily decreasing in most religions. As a result, in Malta, persons studying for the priesthood are thrust into the role of vice parish priest as soon as they are ordained and can expect to be “promoted” to parish priest soon after. The role of a parish priest is however much more managerial rather than pastoral, with incumbents expected to perform a number of managerial roles such as paying the bills and managing accounts, coordinating and leading various types and levels of meetings, and ensuring the smooth running of the parish as a whole. In most other organizations managers are surrounded by a dedicated team of people who have usually been specifically selected according to

certain criteria, are a good fit with the organizational culture, and are all committed to the same goals. Parish workers, however, usually mostly include volunteers with limited availability of time and expertise, and at times having agendas which are at odds with the main agenda of the parish. Priests are not given any managerial training in their formative years, with training mainly focused on theology. Young priests have expressed concern at having to take up such an important role which they do not feel prepared for, and which is somewhat at odds with what they originally expected to be doing as priests. This qualitative study will interview young priests from an organizational psychology perspective, focusing on their perception of how what they are actually doing matches what they expected to be doing, with its possible consequent effects on motivation, job satisfaction, and attrition. Six to eight young priests will be interviewed, and data will be analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis.

**Keywords:** *Parish priests, managers, job satisfaction, motivation, conflicting roles.*

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## ADOLESCENT'S ATTITUDE TO FOSTER OR ADOPTED CHILDREN

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### Abstract

The way how sibling relationships are formed in foster and adopting families (next – “foster”) seems to be an important issue for study. Among other things, sibling relationships play an important role in the formation of personality and persist throughout life longer than other close relationships. We studied through theoretical and qualitative methods the aspects of the relationship of biological adolescent children to their foster siblings, as well as to the adoption situation in general and to the phenomenon of orphanhood. First, 61 adolescents from 12 to 18 years old ( $M=15$ ) gave their free associations to the concept of “adopted child” and definitions of the concept. We analyzed the obtained associations with the method of prototypical analysis by P. Vergès; the definitions were analyzed by the method of phenomenological content analysis. Next, 11 semi-structured interviews were conducted about the adolescent's experience of living in a family with a foster child. Additionally, the modified Sachs-Levi “Incomplete Sentences” technique was used with following phenomenological content analysis. We also used a modified version of the self-assessment method by Dembo-Rubinstein and the “Family Sociogram” method by Eidemiller. We have found that adolescents' social ideas about the concept of “foster child” vary depending on their experience of living in a foster family. The representations of the biological children from foster families were more objective, detailed, and associated with real facts and feelings. These ideas are somewhat more emotionally charged; they combine both positive and negative emotions. Teenagers from foster families better understand both the characteristics of foster children, the circumstances of their lives, and their parents' motives for fostering or adopting a child into the family, as well as the responsibilities of foster families. The attitudes of biological children - adolescents towards foster siblings are generally friendly, but ambivalent. Biological children - adolescents from foster families associate their negative experiences with foster children with unrealistic expectations due to lack of information, as well as with limited personal space and the inability to discuss their experiences regarding changes in the family openly. Adolescents in a foster families experienced some changes in their family structure, for example, they perceive their parents as having become closer to their foster child and pushing their biological child to the periphery of their family system. The results of the study allow us to develop special therapeutic techniques to help foster families.

**Keywords:** *Adolescent, foster family, adopting family, social representations, foster child.*

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## THE PATTERN OF CHANGE IN AUTONOMOUS CAREER MOTIVATION IN MID-ADOLESCENCE

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### **Abstract**

This study focuses on the changes in autonomous career motivation during middle adolescence. Autonomous Career Motivation is a recently developed construct defined as motivation for personal vocational development and career construction, expressed along a relative autonomy continuum (RAC) encompassing six types of career motivation (internal, identified, positive introjected, negative introjected, external, and amotivation). A cohort accelerated longitudinal design was employed, commencing with two cohorts of high school students from the 1st (15 years old) and the 2nd (16 years old) grade, and tracking them for three consecutive years. The sample consisted of 688 adolescents (329 in the younger cohort and 359 in the older cohort; 36% were boys), assessed three times (in springs of 2021, 2022, and 2023) in their schools using computerized assessments. The Autonomous Career Motivation Scale, which measures the six motivational dimensions used to calculate the relative autonomy continuum, was applied. Our data confirmed the existence of a simplex structure of six motivational dimensions and their hypothesized positions on the RAC at all three time points. We examined changes in career motivation over time using ANOVA mixed models, including age and gender as between-group factors. We found a small but significant time effect on the autonomy continuum, indicating a moderate decrease in autonomous motivation over time ( $\eta^2=.016$ ). Specifically, this effect could be attributed to an increase in introjected-negative and external types of motivation, while other types of motivation remained stable. Gender differences were observed, with girls displaying somewhat higher levels of autonomous motivation, primarily manifested in higher identified and introjected-positive motivational types. No main effect of age group or interactional effect of age group was found, confirming the existence of the same pattern of motivational change and stability in both cohorts. The general decline in autonomous motivation for career construction and the increase in specific external motivational types could be attributed to the impending transition that adolescents face after high school, which they confront at the age of eighteen. Practical applications of these findings underscore the importance of personalized career counselling, wherein tailored guidance based on individual motivational patterns can empower adolescents to make informed and fulfilling career choices.

**Keywords:** *Career motivation, longitudinal, adolescence, career guidance, vocational choices.*

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## LANGUAGE OF HATE AND DISCRIMINATION IN POLITICS: DOES IT MATTER WHO WE ARE TO CARE

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### **Abstract**

This study investigates voters' evaluation of politicians' speeches containing hate language, compared with the ones stressing equality or maintaining neutral attitude. The research was conducted in two stages ten years apart. Using correlation analysis and intergroup comparisons, the study examines the relationship between age, education level, and speech ratings. Our findings reveal no significant gender differences in speech evaluation. The results shed light on the complex interplay between demographic factors and speech evaluation. Comparison between two sets of data collected ten years apart also reveals different pattern of attitudes towards hate language between age groups.

**Keywords:** *Hate language, equality, perception, political behavior.*

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## HIGHLY SENSITIVITY, JOB SATISFACTION AND WORK ENGAGEMENT AMONG SPEECH-LANGUAGE THERAPISTS

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### Abstract

High sensory processing sensitivity (Aron & Aron, 1997) is a stable temperamental trait (Dunn, 2001) made up of three components (ease of excitation, low sensory threshold, and aesthetic sensitivity) (Smolewska et al., 2006) or four (to the three first is added controlled harm avoidance) (Bordarie et al., 2022). It is a factor of vulnerability regarding perceived stress (Andresen et al., 2018), burnout and compassion fatigue (Pérez-Chacón et al., 2021). This is true for health workers in general, and specifically for speech-language therapists as well (Bordarie & Mourtialon, 2023). However, health professionals are also known to be passionate, involved and they often express higher job satisfaction scores explaining higher level of compassion satisfaction (Kelly, Runge, & Spencer, 2015). The aim is to study the influence of sensory processing sensitivity and its components on the expression of job satisfaction and work engagement among speech-language therapists; a health workers category who needs more research (Brito-Marcelino et al., 2020). In this study, 396 speech-language therapists answered anonymously a questionnaire. We measured the four components of the French version of the highly sensitive person scale (Bordarie et al., 2022), the three components of Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Zecca et al., 2015) and job satisfaction with a single item (Shimazu et al., 2015; Tavani et al., 2014). Statistical analyses were performed with JASP (version 0.17.1). Sensory processing sensitivity was not correlated with work engagement, but it was negatively correlated with job satisfaction ( $r = -.159$ ;  $p = .002$ ). The latter was positively correlated with work engagement ( $r = .652$ ;  $p < .001$ ). Overall, high sensitivity significantly decreased job satisfaction ( $\beta = -.159$ ;  $p = .002$ ). However, while the latter was negatively influenced by ease of excitation ( $\beta = -.136$ ;  $p = .007$ ) and low sensory threshold ( $\beta = -.150$ ;  $p = .002$ ), it was also positively influenced by aesthetic sensitivity ( $\beta = .177$ ;  $p < .001$ ) and controlled harm avoidance ( $\beta = .801$ ;  $p < .001$ ). The study confirms the dual conception of high sensory processing sensitivity and its paradoxical consequences (Bordarie et al., 2021). Highly sensitive speech-language therapists are less satisfied at work when their sensitivity is linked to the difficulty to manage the consequences of stimuli. This is in line with the literature stating that ease of excitation and low sensory threshold increase anxiety and depression for instance (Ahadi & Basharpour, 2010). Nonetheless, professionals who express a sensitivity linked to aesthetics and to the control of negative stimuli express higher job satisfaction scores. This confirms the protective role of these components (Bordarie et al., 2021).

**Keywords:** Sensory processing sensitivity, job satisfaction, work engagement, vulnerability, speech-language therapists.

## PROFILES OF PROFESSIONAL IDENTIFICATION IN THE FRENCH PUBLIC SERVICE SECTOR

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### Abstract

The scientific literature regularly highlights the growing interest in research on identity issues in organizational studies (e.g., Brown, 2015) and more specifically for identification, presented as a key construct for understanding identity mechanisms (Ashforth, 2016). However, in 2015, Rho and colleagues emphasized the lack of studies on identification in the public sector and nonprofit organizations. Yet, identification constitutes a particularly relevant concept for this professional sector. Firstly, because this sector has a specific set of goals and values (Emery & Martin, 2008). Secondly, because the public sector has been exposed to important reforms in recent decades which may have generated identity shifts (Meyer et al., 2014). Finally, because identification, given its associations with health attributes (Lee et al., 2015) constitutes a fundamental resource for the civil servants who are particularly exposed to stress at work (Douillet, 2017). While many studies have referred to the organization as the target of identification, several scholars remind us that individuals carry multiple identities and that they can thus identify with

multiple foci simultaneously (e.g., organization, work team, occupation (e.g., organization, work team, occupation; Miscenko & Day, 2016). Furthermore, considering these different targets allowed to highlight interaction effects between various identifications (e.g., Horton & Griffin, 2017). Therefore, some researchers have used person-centered analysis to establish identification profiles among workers (e.g., Lipponen, 2005). However, these works often focus more on the dimensions of identification rather than the foci (e.g., Yang et al., 2019). Moreover, until now, these studies on identification profiles have remained highly uncommon in nonprofit organizations. The aim of this research was to investigate the distinctive profiles of French public agents based on their levels of identification with many core foci of the public service, namely their respective organizations, work teams, and professions. Data for this cross-sectional study, involved 574 participants and were collected from various French public authorities (i.e., territorial civil service, state civil service and hospital civil service). Latent profile analyses were conducted to examine different agent profiles, revealing three distinct profiles characterized by varying levels and patterns of identification with the three foci as well as an overall identification. This study contributes to a deeper knowledge of French public sector employees and more globally of the mechanisms of identification in the specific public service sector.

**Keywords:** *Professional identification, French public service, latent profiles analysis.*

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## BETTER UNDERSTANDING THE WORKERS' PRE-IMPLEMENTATION ATTITUDES TOWARD AN ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

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### Abstract

Over the past five years, the covid-19 and the emergence of edge-cutting technologies have led to sudden changes in workplaces worldwide. Consequently, organizational transformations have become essential to adapt to the ever-changing environment. Since the 1950s, organizational changes have been extensively studied and authors have shown that depending on the quality of the implementation, it can be correlated positively or negatively with measures of workers' health, quality of life at work and performance (Rafferty & Jimmieson, 2016). But globally, it has been estimated that 30% of organizational changes fail to reach their goals within the timeframe and means allocated (Michel, Todnem By, & Burnes, 2013). Researchers have underlined the role of employees' attitudes towards change in changes' successes or failures (e.g., Thakur & Srivastava, 2018). They show that the changes supported and endorsed by employees are significantly more likely to have a range of positive outcomes than those met with opposition and resistance. This study aimed at creating a tool based on the *Push, Pull, Anti-push, Anti-pull* model (Mullet et al., 2000) to assess the complex psychosocial motives underlying pre-implementation attitudes toward an organizational change. The 2P2AP model has already been used in professional contexts to predict attitudes toward career transitions such as retirement (Fouquereau et al., 2018) but never to explain individuals' attitudes towards organizational changes. This multidimensional model postulates that individuals' attitudes can be explained by looking simultaneously at four underlying factors: Push and anti-push factors refer to considerations of the *present* situation that lead respectively to positive and negative attitudes toward the new event or situation while pull and anti-pull refer to considerations of the *future* situation that lead respectively to positive and negative attitudes toward it. We used a two-step method to create an *ad hoc* tool. First, an in-depth literature review was made using databases (e.g., Google Scholar, Wiley Open Library) and keywords such as "employees' attitudes" and "organizational change". We then conducted 11 face-to-face semi-structured interviews with questions based on the 2P2AP model. Altogether a set of 48 items was generated, based on the scientific literature and the interviews. This *ad hoc* questionnaire was then administered to 700 French employees of a subdirection undergoing a transformation. An exploratory factorial analysis provided support for the reliability and validity of the four-factor structure of the tool. Using this tool and this model in the future should allow for a better understanding of workers' pre-implementation attitudes toward change.

**Keywords:** *Organizational change, Push Pull Anti-push Anti-pull model, employees attitudes toward organizational change.*

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## EXPLORING THE REPRESENTATIONS OF DISABLED WOMEN USING THE REPERTORY GRID TECHNIQUE

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### Abstract

This study aimed at exploring the representations of disabled women held by disabled women themselves. Most of the literature available explores the representations of disabled people held by non-disabled people. However, this study aimed to fill a gap in the literature by shedding light on how disabled women are viewed by other disabled women. This study is underpinned by social representations theory, intersectionality theory and the social model of disability. The way disabled women are treated often stems from the representations held about them by society, including other disabled women. The understanding of the representations of disabled women can have significant implications for activism by disabled women. This understanding is also important for the drafting of policies and the development of services aimed at addressing the needs of disabled women. Participants were recruited via a voluntary database of disabled people held by the Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability. The repertory grid technique was used to collect data from 14 disabled women aged between 28 and 63 years old. The constructs yielded from the repertory grid technique were analysed using an adaptation of the core-categorisation method. The constructs were grouped under three themes, which are: The Power of First Impressions, A Part of One's Identity, and The Dichotomy of Career and Family. This study shows that the disabled women who took part in this study care about body image and fashion, do not think that the impairment represents disabled women's entire identity, and that having a career is important.

**Keywords:** *Disabled women, social representations theory, intersectionality, social model of disability, repertory grid technique.*

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## EXPERIENCING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE AT UNIVERSITY: THE ROLE OF PERSONAL AND JOB RESOURCES

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### Abstract

Globalization, emigration, demographic decline, national reforms of higher education and other factors often lead to changes in universities. University employees inevitably experience anxiety due to uncertainty related to those changes. It is suggested that negative personal and work-related outcomes could be buffered by positive characteristics, both work-related and personal. Therefore, it is very important to find out the safety factors that could help to deal with large-scale organizational changes, here both job and personal resources of employees should be considered. The purpose of this paper is to identify personal and work-related factors that have significant predictive value for university employees' anxiety about organizational change. 451 Lithuanian university employees (31% males and 67% females) filled up a self-administered questionnaire. Using a variety of world-recognized measurement tools, the employees' personal and job resources were assessed. For this study the anxiety about change scale was developed by the authors (Cronbach alpha = .84). The study was conducted at a time when researched universities experienced significant organizational changes (integration of several universities) related to national reform of higher education. The results of the study revealed that job resources (such as influence at work) and personal resources (such as employee optimism and professional identity) significantly predicted university employees' anxiety about organizational change. Having more influence at his/her work and being more optimistic was related to less anxiety about organizational change. Conversely, more expressed professional identity was related to higher concerns about the changes that are taking place at the university. The results of the study also revealed that employees' work experience and position (academic or non-academic) were also associated with their anxiety about organizational change. Recommendations regarding strengths as well as improvements for universities during the period of organizational change are proposed.

**Keywords:** *Organizational change, anxiety, university, personal resources, job resources.*

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## **THE MEDIATING ROLE OF CONTEXTUAL PERFORMANCE IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-LEADERSHIP AND JOB SATISFACTION**

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### **Abstract**

The pressure associated with the daily pace of changes and unpredictable problems at work directly disturbs the well-being of employees. Job satisfaction is a critical indicator of well-being and can have repercussions on individual performance. On a personal level, these effects can contribute to situations such as burnout and demotivation. As an attitude, job satisfaction results from both the external environment and the individual's intrinsic qualities, of which self-leadership has been highlighted as a relevant competence for most of today's work contexts. Self-leadership is a process of self-influence by which individuals regulate their thoughts, behaviours, and emotions. It can function as an internal source of leadership and is associated with more effective performance and lower levels of anxiety at work. Through self-leadership strategies, individuals may engage in contextual performance, defined as voluntary behaviour that supports the psychological, social, and organisational environment. As they develop these strategies, they make more positive evaluations of their work. Therefore, this study aims to investigate how employee's self-leadership skills are related to contextual performance and job satisfaction. For that, we analysed the mediating role of contextual performance in the relationship between self-leadership and job satisfaction. Utilizing a cross-sectional study design, we gathered data from 250 participants who volunteered from several organizations. To test the hypothesized mediation effect, we used bootstrapping techniques from Hayes' PROCESS macro program. Results supported the tested model. Firstly, it showed that self-leadership significantly and positively influences job satisfaction. Secondly, it revealed a partial mediating role of contextual performance in the relationship between self-leadership and job satisfaction. Summarily, the results suggest that employees with higher self-leadership skills tend to demonstrate more contextual performance behaviours and higher levels of job satisfaction. Given the inherent constraints of a cross-sectional design, these results suggest a need to adopt a longitudinal design in subsequent studies to elucidate the temporal dynamics among those relationships. This study adds a contribution to existing knowledge on self-leadership by empirically testing its relationships with contextual performance and job satisfaction. Also, the insights provide intervention clues and actions for organizations seeking to enhance the performance effectiveness of employees as well as their well-being at work. Therefore, fostering the development of self-leadership skills can benefit organizations and, at the same time, contribute to employee well-being.

**Keywords:** *Job satisfaction, self-leadership, contextual performance.*

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## **FACTORS INFLUENCING ACCULTURATION STRATEGIES OF ARMENIANS AZERIS LIVING IN GEORGIA**

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*Department of Psychology, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (Georgia)*

### **Abstract**

This research presents an in-depth study on the acculturation strategies of ethnic minorities in Georgia, with a specific focus on Armenians and Azeris. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to identify the factors significantly influencing the choice of acculturation strategies. Societal factors such as age, education, knowledge of the state language, perception of ethnic equality, and religious practices, and personal characteristics like locus of control, self-esteem, and optimism were found to be significant predictors. Armenians predominantly adopt an integration strategy, while Azeris favor separation. The research also discovered a complex interplay between societal attitudes, the process of integration, and the formation of social bonds like marriage, especially in the context of the critical role of religion in Georgian society. The findings provide valuable insights for policy development aimed at facilitating better integration and social cohesion in Georgia's multicultural context

**Keywords:** *Acculturation, ethnic minorities, integration, Georgia, societal factors.*

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## THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AS A CAREER SHOCK: UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

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### Abstract

The term “career shock” signifies unplanned and unanticipated events that affect a person's career. Akkermans and colleagues defined career shock as an unsettling, unusual and hard to control event that prompts concerns about one's career. The COVID-19 pandemic was an event that has unexpectedly, suddenly and profoundly affected students' lives, especially over the first months of the pandemic. Thus, we wanted to explore whether psychology students in Serbia had experienced the first and most unknown wave of the COVID-19 pandemic as a career shock. The qualitative study involved 64 third-year undergraduate psychology students (87.5% women) from Serbia who were asked to write a short narrative about how they experienced the pandemic, if their experience was a positive or a negative one and why. Additionally, based on a career shock definition they labeled COVID-19 as a (non)shocking experience. Data were collected in spring 2020, during the first wave of COVID-19 pandemic in Serbia. Students' narratives were analyzed using the Gioia method. The majority of participants experienced the pandemic as a career shock (72%). We have identified Covid pandemic both as a positive and a negative career shock. As themes we identified positive and negative aspects of online teaching, positive and negative career consequences. The complex experience of online teaching developed into a two-valence career shock. In addition, there were consequences of online teaching of a more personal nature. On the positive side, students felt safer, had more time to pursue other interests, and more time for family and friends. On the negative side, students felt isolated. The fear of missing out (FOMO) made them anxious about the quality of their studies. Results indicate two broad dimensions of students' experiences of the Covid pandemic: 1. Studies and knowledge, and 2. Employability. Clearly, students experienced the COVID-19 pandemic as a career shock. The shifting valence gives an interesting insight to the still developing theory of career shocks. Findings may offer practical recommendations on how to reorganize curricula and other activities to prepare for developing and implementing educational interventions aimed at preventing and/or alleviating the negative consequences of career shocks, not only during the pandemic and in the post-pandemic period, but also in times of other disruptive and extraordinary events as well.

**Keywords:** *Career shock, COVID-19 pandemic, psychology students, Serbia.*

## IDENTITY STRATEGIES OF GEORGIANS MIGRANTS IN GERMANY

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### Abstract

The study shows how Georgian migrants settled down in Germany. This qualitative research centers on the process of adaptation and integration of Georgians in a new environment. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, economic difficulties have led to the highest levels of out-migration from country after independence of Georgia. Based on the data of General Population Census from 2014 the Georgian population as of January 1st 2015 is amounts to 3,729,500 persons. During last two decades from a population reduction of around 1,241 (22, 72%) persons. The processes of adaptation and integration are complex since they usually imply keeping the balance between the will to maintain one's own cultural identity while constructing positive relations with the host society, a multitude of factors contribute to the integration process such as the individual's ability to learn a new language and culture, not resisting a value of dominant and primary culture; the openness and tolerance of the host society towards new members, etc. Identity tactics and strategies, which often resort to the use of representatives from ethnic groups, play a unique role in the interaction processes within new socio-cultural spaces. By mobilizing these strategies, ethnic groups manage to engage themselves into the local social-interaction network and move towards integration to the host society. This explains that representatives of the same ethnic groups located in different socio-cultural environments could mobilize different identity strategies: individual



and collective identity strategies (Camilleri & Malewska-Peyre, 1980). Based on in-depth interviews with migrants living more than 10 years in Germany this work focuses on study perception of Georgian emigrants about: the dynamic of adaptation process in the new socio- cultural spaces. According to identity strategies based on two axes: the simple and the complex coherence the study tries to analyze Georgian migrants' individual and collective identity strategies.

**Keywords:** *Migration, ethnic identity, identity strategies.*

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## **WORK ADDICTION AND WORK-RELATED DEPRESSION IN JAMAICA: WHAT IS THE COST OF TOO MUCH WORK?**

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### **Abstract**

Long working hours and occupational stress are well-recognized contributors to the global burden of disease (World Health Organization, 2019). Work addiction has relatively high prevalence rates and is strictly related to high stress in and outside work, overworking, stress-related diseases and disorders (Atroszko, Demetrovics, & Griffiths, 2020). Considering these findings, Jamaica was part of an international study to identify the risk factors for work addiction. Work addiction is a relatively new concept and has relevance beyond workplaces/organizations to a range of applied contexts, including health. In an increasingly diverse and globally interconnected workforce, it is important to establish the precursors and consequences of work addiction in varying countries and cultural contexts. These insights are necessary for psychosocial interventions to mitigate negative effects of work addiction and for identifying where there needs to be preventive efforts at the individual, organizational and government levels. The project was approved by the Research Ethics Committees in Katowice, Poland and the University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica. Two hundred and seventy-seven (277) adult Jamaican citizens who were working full-time for at least one year with organizations that have at least 10 employees in total, were recruited via work organizations and social media platforms to complete an online survey. Participation in the study was anonymous and voluntary. The Impact 2024 presentation is focused on the prevalence of Work Addiction (assessed using the Bergen Work Addiction Scale by Andreassen, Griffiths, Hetland, & Pallesen, 2012) and its relationship to Work-Related Depression (assessed using the Occupational Depression Inventory by Bianchi & Schonfeld, 2020). Frequencies and multiple regression analyses show high levels of work addiction and that higher levels of work addiction are significantly related to work-related depression. This presentation will extend beyond the findings to considering how such findings may inform Jamaican public and private sector organizations' policies and procedures regarding working conditions, work climate and organizational values.

**Keywords:** *Work addiction, work-related depression, job stress, Caribbean.*

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## **GEORGIA'S POLITICAL IDENTITY & MIDDLE CORRIDOR**

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### **Abstract**

This paper considers a wider Black Sea Region for Georgia's identity search considering Georgia's geopolitical location, its Euro-Atlantic aspirations and its main value for the region and beyond – all features for a successful transit hub. It is even more relevant in the context of the current geopolitical changes and an increased focus on Middle Corridor. Georgia's complex political geography has always been and will stay a reality that we cannot avoid on multiple levels – be it politics, economy, or identity. Georgia like many other post-Soviet countries has number of identities, and it will be ready to embrace its regional identity to the extent it does not raise eyebrows on the ultimate goal – whether Georgia is Western enough or not. Georgian people have made their choice: For the vast majority it's a pro-Western orientation. The Middle Corridor, also called TITR (Trans-Caspian International Transport Route), is a trade route from Southeast Asia and China to Europe via Kazakhstan, Caspian Sea, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. It is an alternative to the Northern Corridor, to the north through Russia, and the Ocean Route to

the south, via the Suez Canal. Geographically, the Middle Corridor is the shortest route between Western China and Europe. International Sanctions on Russia and COVID-19 before that make Middle Corridor a safer and better option for trade. Main question of the paper is whether the Middle Corridor be enough for tying Georgia closer to its wider region or not. Based on different intergroup approaches developed in social psychology (e.g., Social Identity Theory, Realistic Conflict Theory), political identities refer to identification with and meaning attributed to membership in politically relevant groups, including political parties and national, ethnic, linguistic, or gender groups. A key concept in this intergroup approach to political psychology is political identity. This paper argues that (i) Georgia's political identity is strongly tied with its Euro-Atlantic aspirations and (ii) Georgia will embrace its regional identity if it sees the perspective of strengthening its political identity.

**Keywords:** *Political psychology, middle corridor, political identity, Georgia, Euro-Integration.*

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## LEGAL PSYCHOLOGY

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### VIOLENCE RISK APPRAISAL AND LEGAL PRINCIPLES – FROM LEGAL PERSPECTIVE TO PRACTICAL APPLICATION

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#### Abstract

The study of the mind and behavior gives us the opportunity to predict and to change behavior. In forensic psychology, examinations either try to give an answer, if the person was aware that the crime broke a social norm and was able to control his behavior, or tries to give an answer, if an offender will become a reoffender. The Austrian jurisprudence also focuses on aspects of behavioral prognosis: the verdict should not serve retaliative purposes, but aims at preventing the offender from reoffending. Building on this subordinate principle, that defines justice systems focused on prevention rather than punishment as means of retaliation, judges have to follow legal provisions that put an emphasis on factors related to the individual offender and their current risks and needs. This presupposed individuality and topicality of penal decision making requires the interplay of different scientific perspectives and a strong interdisciplinary practice. Therefore, psychological risk appraisal guides are used to provide valid indicators for recidivism risks leading to a beneficial development towards an interdisciplinary sentencing practice. Nevertheless, in light of the absence of substantive discussions of the expert's opinion in court and yet the high rates with which the court follows the expert opinions often by simply incorporating the opinion verbatim into the verdict (94.7% in sex offenses-cases, 95.1% in homicide-cases, 88.6% in arson-cases) this supposedly interdisciplinary, rather multidisciplinary legal practice bears risks (Fegert, 2006). By looking closer at the German versions of the VRAG-R (Rettenberger et al., 2017) and the LSI-R (Dahle et al., 2012), it becomes visible that some aspects of the tools have to be critically reflected from a legal perspective when incorporated into Austrian criminal proceedings. If adapted unquestioned, the application of this tools leads to fundamental legal questions and potential infringements. The underlying research focuses on revealing these contradictions between the two sciences, while implementing the tools into criminal proceedings and thus aims at paving the way towards an integrative rather than merely additive type of interdisciplinarity. Practical implications for the psychological assessment need to be considered.

**Keywords:** *Violent risk assessment, risk instruments, legal principle, interdisciplinarity.*

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### PERCEPTION OF AGGRESSION BETWEEN SIBLINGS IN EARLY ADOLESCENCE

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#### Abstract

Although aggression between siblings is one of the most common forms of aggression in the family, it consistently gains less attention from researchers than aggression between spouses, parents, and children or peer aggression and violence (Tippet & Wolke, 2015). It is also often treated as normative behavior (Kahn & Rogers, 2015; Phillips et al., 2009), which diminishes its importance and influences the perception of its potential consequences as harmless (Phillips et al., 2009; Poraj-Weder & Poraj, 2021). In our study, we aim to determine whether aggression between siblings is perceived differently depending on (1) the form (physical vs. psychological) and (2) the gender arrangement in the dyad, taking into account the differentiation of aggressor-victim roles. The study is currently being carried out in a repeated-measurement, experimental design using the *vignette* technique. It involves 500 people aged 12–16, balanced in gender and basic socioeconomic characteristics. Participants evaluate eight short

vignettes (physical vs. psychological aggression) in four 'role and gender' configurations and then respond to the statements of the questionnaire measuring *normative beliefs for aggression* (Bailey & Ostrov, 2007; Huesmann et al., 1992; Huesman & Guerra, 1997) and the tendency to take perspective from the Davis Empathic Sensitivity Scale (1983, 1999). We assume that beliefs about the normativity of psychological aggression will be more liberal compared to beliefs about physical aggression (Basow et al., 2007; Seff et al., 2009) (H1). In the case of physical aggression, the assessment of the normativity of such behavior will be less liberal when the aggressor is a woman (H2) and when the victim of aggression is a woman and the aggressor is a man (Bassow et al., 2007; DeHart et al., 2010; Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al., 2004; Sorenson & Taylor, 2005) (H3). We also assume that perspective-taking will be a factor that weakens the tendency to approve aggressive behavior, regardless of its form (Miller & Eisenberg, 1988; Richardson et al., 1994; Richardson et al., 1998) (H4).

**Keywords:** *Sibling aggression, normative beliefs for aggression, vignette technique, aggressor-victim roles.*

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## THE ROLE OF PARENTAL ATTITUDES AND RUMINATIVE THOUGHTS IN SHAPING PRONENESS TO AGGRESSION AND DEPRESSION

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### Abstract

Child-rearing behaviors undertaken by parents, including parental attitudes, have been linked to both externalizing (Dominiak-Kochanek et al., 2018) and internalizing problem behaviors (Dwairy, 2010). Thus, negative parental attitudes such as parental rejection, overprotection, psychological control, or low emotional warmth in parent-child dyad contribute positively to wide range of problem behaviors, as opposed to parental attitudes based on high emotional warmth, behavioral control, and high acceptance of a child. However, little is known about the psychological mechanisms and processes mediating the effect of parental negative attitudes on aggressive and depressive proneness. The aim of this study is to define whether ruminative thoughts of two kinds may explain the relationship between parental attitudes experienced in childhood and the level of depression and aggression revealed in adulthood. More specifically, we included rumination on sadness and rumination on anger to find out whether they mediate the relationship between negative parental attitudes and depression/ aggression. Thus, we assumed that the crucial intervening variables responsible for the long-term negative effects of negative parental attitudes are ruminative thoughts and that the proneness to rumination on sadness and rumination on anger differentiates the psychological effects in adulthood, with anger rumination predicting aggression (H1) and rumination on sadness being responsible for depression (H2). The study is currently being carried out, and the final sample will consist of 400 people aged 18 to 35. To measure parental attitudes, we use the s-EMBU Scale (Arrindel et al., 1999; Poraj-Weder, 2013), which enables the retrospective evaluation of parental rejection, overprotection and emotional warmth. Proneness to rumination of two kinds will be measured by the Anger Rumination Scale (Sukhodolsky et al., 2001), and the Rumination on Sadness Scale (Conway et al., 2000). Finally, to measure aggression operationalized as physical, verbal aggression, hostility, and anger, the BPAQ is used (Buss & Perry, 1992), while the brief depression severity measure (PHQ-9) is used to evaluate depressive symptoms. In summary, this study aims to explain why negative parental attitudes consistently contribute to aggression and depression in adulthood and why some adults with adverse parenting experiences must struggle with internalizing problems while others reveal externalizing problem behaviors.

**Keywords:** *Parental attitudes, anger rumination, rumination on sadness, aggression, depression.*

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## COGNITIVE AND EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

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### THE INFLUENCE OF BILINGUALISM ON LEXICAL ACCESS AND CATEGORIZATION PROCESS IN PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

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#### Abstract

Studies have highlighted that bilingualism appears to facilitate communication (Dieguez & Hemmerle, 2014; Bialystok, 2017) and has beneficial effects on the emergence and development of cognitive abilities (Kail, 2015). Children who just start using two languages, frequently switch between languages, namely code switching. They used words from both languages and these seem to play an important part on language acquisition process. Bialystok & Martin (2004) have shown that bilinguals develop the ability to inhibit one language while using the other, thus accelerating cognitive development which includes perception, attention, memory, inhibition, cognitive flexibility, programming, planning. Other studies (Bialystok et al., 2008) have also demonstrated that exposure to two linguistic systems may enhance flexibility and cognitive inhibition capacities in bilingual individuals, which can confer an advantage during categorization tasks requiring changes in categorization criteria and the suppression of irrelevant information or responses. The aim of the present study is to examine whether bilingual children aged between 6 and 8 years-old could access to lexico-semantic store more easily than monolinguals. Firstly, drawing upon existing theories and empirical evidence, it is posited that bilingualism potentially enhances access to the lexico-semantic store due to the necessity of engaging with and navigating two linguistic systems. By investigating this phenomenon in young children, this study aims to ascertain whether these purported advantages in lexical access are discernible at an early developmental stage. Secondly, this research is predicated on the hypothesis that bilingual children, within this age range, exhibit a heightened comprehension of words and their meanings across both languages. It is conjectured that the comparatively facile access to the lexico-semantic store could serve as an indicator of an early and robust development of linguistic competencies in bilingual children, suggesting a more advanced level of language comprehension and cognitive engagement compared to their monolingual counterparts. In this study, 20 French-Arabic Bilingual children and 20 French Monolingual children aged between 6 to 8 years-old (all participants lived in France and were recruited in primary school: grades 1 and 2) performed a verbal Fluency Task (Cardebat et al., 1990; Abdelgafar & Moawad, 2015). The verbal fluency task is a short test of verbal functioning. It consists of two tasks: category fluency (semantic fluency) and letter /lexical fluency (phonemic or lexical fluency). Participants are given 2 min to produce as many words as possible within a semantic category (category fluency) or starting with a given letter (letter fluency). The participant's score in each task is the number of unique correct words. The results of the study show for the categorical fluency task an advantage for a bilingual for accessing categorical lexico-semantic storage. No difference was observed in the lexical fluency task.

**Keywords:** *Bilingualism, fluency task, lexical access, cognitive flexibility and inhibition, children.*

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## **WHAT USE IS THE REPRODUCTIVE IMAGINATION TO THE VISITOR OF A MUSEUM EXHIBITION?**

**Colette Dufresne-Tassé**

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### **Abstract**

This study focuses on three sub-forms of the reproductive imagination identified by Kant. It is carried out in an exhibition on Beringia based on information gathered from 30 visitors of the general-public type. Its aim is to verify the presence of these sub-forms as visitors go through the exhibition, and to propose hypotheses on their role as well as on the museum interventions likely to promote their production.

**Keywords:** *Reproductive imagination, adult visitors, museum exhibition.*

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## **THE ROLE OF HUMOUR AND ABSURDITY IN CREATING MEMORABLE AND PERSUASIVE BEVERAGE ADVERTISEMENTS**

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### **Abstract**

**Motivation:** Lately, some advertisements use particularly absurd and/or humorous elements to draw attention. We will focus on segments of beverage marketing - in particular, the categories of colas, milk, and water - to investigate the effects of conventional marketing compared to absurd marketing to distinguish memorability.

**Methodology:** In a set-up of marketing campaign pictures (static images) displayed for an even amount of time, examples for all three categories will be provided in randomised sequences within the category to avoid ordering bias. Experimental participants will be a convenience sample of the student population within an academy held in Copenhagen, Denmark. After each stimulus category, brief questions need to be answered based on the memorability concerning the ads. Additionally, we will use biosensors to measure participants' galvanic skin response (GSR), Eye Tracker (ET), and electroencephalogram (EEG) data. An evaluation of participants' bodily responses concerning the ads will take place along with their self-report on memorability. After this, the authors used ideal stimuli to obtain the quantitative results after examining 116 participants' online forms to see how people react to stimuli that have a humorous, absurd, or non-sensical approach. The survey was conducted with the students of OTH Amberg Weiden.

**Results:** Participants will display emotions (FEA) when seeing humorous or absurd ads, focusing more on the campaign's taglines and picking up on clever word games, whereas conventional advertising will not arouse responses (GSR). Similarly, the ET will provide insights into the advertisements' gaze plots and heat maps, which can be correlated with the memorability of logos, brands, and taglines. Through measures of electrodes, the EEG data will indicate whether brain activity in the areas of the frontal lobe was involved in higher mental functions such as judgment, emotional expressions, and concentration while looking at the ads. We expect the same results with the online survey method.

**Recommendations:** Our survey self-report highly correlates with the bio-sensory data collected and indicates that humorous or absurd advertising draws attention and leads to higher memorability.

**Keywords:** *Absurdity, advertising, bio-sensor experimental research, memorability, recognition.*

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## **PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SURVIVAL AS MOTIVES: EXPLAINING ALL ATTENTION AND MEMORY**

**Rebecca C. Curtis**

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### **Abstract**

“The last peculiarity of consciousness to which attention is to be drawn. . . is that. . . it is always interested more in one part of its object (thought) than in another, and welcomes and rejects, or chooses, all the while” (James, 1890). Gladwell (2005) has documented many effects of unconscious processing in his best-seller *Blink*. But he does not address what happens to threatening experiences. Although researchers have investigated threats related to survival, only recently have they begun to investigate threats to individuals’ identity and their major belief systems. We cannot give everything in our environment conscious attention. The amount of information we can keep in mind at any one time is limited. Like a flashlight on a dark night, the beam of attention is narrow and must also scan the environment (Wachtel, 1967). Sensory processes are selective. Visually, most salient to our attention are stimuli that are novel, unexpected, aversive, and pleasurable. We are particularly attracted to people, places, bodies, and body parts (Kanwisher). Neural pathways are selected in according to the value system. There is consensus that the major value is usually survival. The motivations of physical and psychological survival are often more important than feeling good.

*Keywords: Attention, memory, survival, selection.*

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## **IMPROVING MACHINE LEARNING PREDICTION OF CONSTRUCTS: MENTAL FATIGUE**

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### **Abstract**

Mental fatigue is a psychophysiological state that plays an important role in various domains of human machine interaction where it may increase risk of injury or accidents. To prevent threats to life and property, novel techniques combining psychological and computational approaches are needed and thus explored. Previous research has focused on training machine learning (ML) models on different types of fatigue input data and experiment settings, and recently on the generalizability of the models. However, current ML development struggles with various issues such as unclear analysis of what the model is actually learning. When trained on data that are only partially correctly labeled, it can learn artifacts of the dataset construction instead of the construct state. Psychometric measures that are used to label data have usually imperfect/questionable reliability, thus even if administered correctly may label some data incorrectly. The most widely used method for labeling mental fatigue states are subjective scales, which also possess limitations on construct validity. In this contribution, an iterative procedure to improve both reliability and validity of the labeling based on generalizability theory is proposed. This labeling procedure is constructed from components already present in the dataset and relevant to the construct being predicted. In the case of mental fatigue, a subjective scale, performance decrease and environmental reference extracted in 7 datasets collected on different sites is used, with several methods used to induce fatigue, all with heart rate variability as input data. The quality of combinations and levels of the label is assessed by analyzing unwanted variances and by using an equivalent of reliability from generalizability theory. Applying this procedure, components can be added to a label and created labels can be directly compared. Considering the iterative nature of this process, labels can be dynamically adjusted based on added new data. The whole procedure adds flexibility to dataset design, allowing for easier integration of datasets, even those that were not originally intended for ML. As a result, we enhance increasing variability and amount of data that is available for researchers, promoting its use beyond the ML-based mental fatigue prediction.

*Keywords: Machine learning, fatigue, generalizability, reliability.*

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## MENTAL CULTURAL MODELS: HOW MODERN GEORGIANS PERCEIVE LOVE, SEXUALITY AND FAMILY

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### Abstract

Socio-cultural factors affect the formation of the models of cognitive processes, world perception, interpersonal interactions, social exchange and learning as well as the specificity of beliefs and values. Linguistic factors, including the cultural perceptions of words and concepts show differences not only in perception and judgment but also in attitudes to the events represented by concepts. Cognitivist direction of modern anthropology understands culture as shared cultural experience organized by schemas. Cultural schema or cultural model is thought to be a mental structure developed through cultural experience and used to form expectations and judgments. Our model is based on the conceptual framework of cultural models. The purpose of the study is to examine the Georgian's mental cultural models using 145 selected concepts. 50 people of Georgian nationality (age range 18 - 25) participated in the study. The study used emic approach. Methodology: The study used experimental psychosemantic method and interview with participants. Experimental psychosemantic method was employed to create a semantic space which was analyzed using respondents' ideas about the rational bases of the classification of concepts. Hierarchical clustering was used for experimental data and semiotic and discourse analysis for qualitative data. A synthetic approach was applied to data analysis. The study is interdisciplinary and the interpretation is based on linguistic, ethnographic and folkloric material. Out of the 17 cultural models identified in the basic study, we will focus on 3 thematically interrelated cultural models (love, family, sexuality) corresponding to mental representations obtained through sustainable analysis. Conclusion: The cluster 'love' reflects universalist orientations of traditional cultures where 'love' is perceived in the context of social capital and reproduction. However, male and female do not belong to the given cluster. They belong to the 'family' cluster which means that research participants unconsciously separate romantic love from family. 'Love' is not part of the sexuality cluster, the structure of which is strongly influenced by the Orthodox perspective. Sexual attraction as a component of romantic love is presented in the context of 'sin'. 'Virginity' is represented as an opposition to the categories related to 'sin.' On the whole, the content of the three models represents the orientations of collectivist cultures. Despite a deep penetration of western and emancipatory tendencies into gender relations, understanding of romantic relationships is affected by tangible socio-cultural influences reflected in the perception of family and sexual relations.

**Keywords:** *Cognitive anthropology, cultural model, psychosemantics, semantic space, natural concepts.*

## DOES A SMILE SIGNAL HAPPINESS? BELIEFS AMONG LAYPERSONS ABOUT EMOTIONAL FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

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<sup>1</sup>*M.A.*; <sup>2</sup>*Ph.D.*

### Abstract

Although the majority of experts agree that emotions and their corresponding facial expressions are universal, beliefs of laypersons about this matter are not well understood. The purpose of the current study was to better understand whether or not belief in universality is the "commonsense" view and determine how belief in universal emotional facial expressions might be related to performance on an emotion recognition task. In total, 236 participants responded to an online study designed to examine beliefs about emotional facial expressions. Participants first provided demographic information, indicated that emotions and emotional facial expressions are universal, and then responded to more specific questions examining their beliefs about these constructs. Participants then completed a modified emotion recognition task, in which they viewed 14 faces (50% female) depicting each of the six basic emotions (and a neutral face). During this task participants responded to questions about the facial expressions that they saw. Although the majority of participants endorsed the idea that emotions were universal, only 34% believed that emotional facial expressions were universal. Those who endorsed the universality view of



emotional facial expressions were more likely to believe that facial expressions were also universal. Facial expressions were most commonly identified by participants as the clearest and best signal for identifying emotions in others. Participants who believed emotional facial expressions were universal, those who did not believe that they were universal, and those who were unsure did not differ in accuracy on the emotion recognition task. All three groups were also highly confident in their emotion recognition abilities. During the emotion recognition task, participants indicated a belief that emotional facial expressions occur with underlying emotions more than 70% of the time. The results here suggest that while most laypersons believe emotions are universal, this belief does not translate into a belief in universal emotional facial expressions. Whether or not laypersons endorse a view of universal emotional facial expressions, they still consider emotional facial expressions to be an important signal for understanding and recognizing the underlying emotional states of others.

**Keywords:** *Facial expression, emotion, universality, basic emotions, emotion recognition.*

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## PERCEPTION AS AN INTELLIGENT ACT

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Faculdade de Filosofia de Braga (Portugal)*

### **Abstract**

We intend to demonstrate that human perception is better understood when thought from the perspective of Aristotelian-Thomistic Philosophy. After concluding for its existence, Descartes, in the 17th century, concludes that there are ideas that we all possess, such as the idea of “perfection”. This idea cannot result from experience, and it’s God the source of the idea of perfection in us, and the one who guarantees the existence not only of external reality but also of our own correct reasoning. Very far from the God of Thomas Aquinas who is *Alpha* and *Omega*, Descartes' god is a god situated and secondary between the subject and reality which, in turn, is guaranteed by God, in a vicious circle between God and the subject. It’s a subjective or logical God, such as Kant's, but not a real God. Reality is, therefore, subjectively intelligible and truth objectively achieved, and the principle of causality is, in this way, subjectively valid. Reality is intelligible not because it’s provided by intelligible forms — by intelligible (and not only sensitive matter) that we, in fact, perceive — but because it is a reality presented by extension that is nothing more than a reflection of the logical-mathematical universe, thought by Modernity and which, with this thinker, is innate to the subject. This is a pure and finished reason. The extensive reality is purged of subjective elements; it is logical-mathematical (therefore, it is thought). It’s a kind of idealism and not realism and which results in a physicalist and materialist view of reality. Materialism, called physicalism in mainstream culture, consists of the idea that there is a world out there that is not experiential. It is material, but the way the word is used here has a strict conceptual definition. Matter is something that can be specifically described by numbers. It's a world without qualities. The world is purely quantitative and, because we are part of this world, we are also quantitative. The entire world of qualities that, deep down, constitutes our reality, is generated, according to materialism, in a not very well specified way and by a brain inside our head. The world outside has no flavors, colors, smells or sounds. We cannot see it because it has no qualities. The best we can do is imagine it as some kind of set of mathematical equations floating in the void.

**Keywords:** *Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, substantial form, Descartes, perception.*

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## ENVIRONMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

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### PLACE ATTACHMENT AND THE MEANING OF HOME FOR IMMIGRANTS

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#### **Abstract**

The physical and psychological aspects of the meaning of 'home' have been studied extensively; however, studies in this area relating to place attachment for immigrants leave room for further research. While most individuals throughout their lives have had multiple homes, for immigrants specifically it has meant establishing those homes in more than one country. The idea that immigrants have their feet planted in two or more places suggests they may also be attached to more than one home. In reality, some immigrants live the rest of their lives in their host country, while others feel a need to return to their place of birth—their homeland—due to place attachment. Those latter individuals feel a strong desire to reconnect to loved ones, childhood places, and memories 'back home.' The purpose of this research is to explore the meaning of home for immigrants who have had multiple homes through a collection of stories of migration and remigration. As the return migrants share their stories, the shared and diverse lived experiences and place attachments will distinctively reveal their meaning of home.

*Keywords: Place attachment, meaning of home, immigrant experiences, remigration.*

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### A DESCRIPTIVE-SOCIAL-NORM BASED INTERVENTION TO INCREASE A PRO-ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIOR IN A RESTAURANT

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#### **Abstract**

Food waste has emerged as a global issue with significant economic, social, and environmental implications. Regardless of the stage at which it occurs, food waste represents an opportunity to address the global challenge of hunger and malnutrition while exerting unnecessary pressure on the environment and resources. This paper investigates the use of a descriptive social norm to encourage restaurant customers to use doggy bags thereby reducing food waste. Two studies were run in two restaurants in Northern Italy. In the first study, we used a table tent already analyzed in the literature and the results showed a significant increase in the request for doggy bags in the presence of the table tent. Since the presence of the table tent also increased the likelihood of customers to leave food on their plates, we decided to run a second study, in another restaurant, to analyze by two separate table tents the effect of the pure social norm and the effect of the reminder. Results suggest that only the reminder effectively encourages customers to use doggy bags, but both conditions increase the amount of food leftover.

*Keywords: Nudging, environment, decision-making, social norms, pro-environmental behavior.*

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## **BEING A CLIMATE VOLUNTEER IN TURKEY: TURNING ECO-ANXIETY INTO ACTION**

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### **Abstract**

The repercussions of climate change pose a threat not only to physical health but also to psychological well-being. Specifically, an awareness of climate change and its consequences can lead individuals to experience eco-anxiety. Given the current state of climate change and its potential future outcomes, it is normal to feel anxious about it, as this anxiety can serve as a driving force for pro-environmental actions. However, when eco-anxiety becomes overwhelming and people lack effective coping strategies, it can lead to a state of paralysis. In particular, individuals actively involved in climate-related efforts may be more prone to experiencing eco-anxiety due to their heightened awareness of the climate crisis. The objective of this study was to explore the perceptions, emotions, and experiences of individuals engaged as climate volunteers concerning climate change. Data for the research were gathered through semi-structured interviews with seven female climate volunteer participants aged 21-30, residing in different cities in Turkey, and having 6 months to 2 years of climate volunteering experience. The analysis, carried out using phenomenological analysis, revealed that climate volunteers perceive climate change as a human-induced, critical, and inadequately acknowledged crisis in contemporary society. They believe that collective and fair efforts by all individuals can mitigate this crisis. Participants frequently expressed emotions of fear, anxiety, anger, and pessimism related to climate change, although some held onto a sense of hope. Regarding the experience of being a climate volunteer, it was evident that the desire to take meaningful actions against the climate crisis and a positive view of civil society organizations played pivotal roles in motivating participants to engage in voluntary work. Sustaining their voluntary efforts appeared to be closely linked to feelings of accomplishment and belonging to a community with shared values. Taking meaningful actions, preserving hope, and seeking support from the volunteer group were deemed crucial for safeguarding participants' psychological well-being in the face of the climate crisis. In conclusion, eco-anxiety and a favorable perception of civil society can serve as motivating factors for climate volunteer activities. Engaging in actions with a like-minded group may also serve as a purposeful coping strategy in addressing anxiety, thus contributing to individuals' mental well-being.

**Keywords:** *Climate change, eco-anxiety, climate volunteers.*

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## **IMPACT OF NATURAL AND URBAN ENVIRONMENTS ON THERMAL PAIN PERCEPTION: EXPERIMENTAL STUDY IN VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENTS**

**Anna Mucha, Ewa Wojtyna, & Anita Pollak**

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### **Abstract**

The environment in which an individual resides and observes may play a meaningful role in well-being and related constructs. Prior investigations have highlighted the positive influence of natural environments on individuals, impacting mood and psychophysical sensations, such as pain relief. Conversely, urban settings, dominated by concrete elements, might lead to mood decline and heightened stress levels. Comparable associations concerning affect arise in the context of perceiving virtual natural and urban environments. Nevertheless, this topic has been insufficiently explored by many researchers, particularly in the context of pain associations. The aforementioned studies inspired and guided the design and implementation of the described experimental research in the field of environmental psychology, utilizing emerging technologies, especially virtual reality (VR), increasingly recognized in mental health. The primary objective was to investigate the impact of a simulated virtual environment, mirroring a natural setting abundant in greenery, on the perception of acute pain induced by thermal stimuli (high temperature) – encompassing intensity, unpleasantness, pain tolerance. Comparative analyses were conducted between the virtual natural environment (constructed in the likeness of a therapeutic garden), virtual urban environment and a control group without virtual projections. Secondary objectives aimed to determine the mutual relationships among variables such as positive and negative emotions, virtual environment preferences, sense of presence and restorative experience in the context of the perception of

environments and induced thermal pain. The study involved 126 healthy adults, with 42 individuals in each of the three comparison groups. Oculus Rift VR technology and the TSA-II neurosensory analyzer facilitated the experiment. Alongside demographic data, participants' subjective feelings concerning VR and pain were evaluated using: *Visual Analogue Scale* (VAS), original *Restorative Experience in the Virtual World* questionnaire, an adapted *Slater-Usoh-Steed* (SUS) questionnaire. Results of psychometric analyses (Kruskal-Wallis tests, Wilcoxon tests and contrast analyses) underscored the positive impact of the virtual natural environment on individual pain perception and mood. The virtual natural environment outperformed the virtual urban environment and the control group, particularly in subjective pain components like intensity or unpleasantness. Variables such as restorative experience, sense of presence and virtual environment preference also proved pivotal in pain perception and tolerance threshold alterations, contingent on specific conditions. This suggests significant potential applications of virtual natural environments in various areas of psychology and related fields, including supportive analgesic method and a post-psychotherapeutic session relaxation form.

**Keywords:** *Environmental psychology, nature, acute pain, virtual reality, experiment.*

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## **AN EXPLORATION OF ECO-ANXIETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENGAGEMENT IN MALTA USING A MIXED-METHODS RESEARCH DESIGN**

**Claire Bonello, & Mary-Anne Lauri**

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### **Abstract**

The ongoing ecological crisis has stirred profound emotional, cognitive, and behavioural responses among individuals worldwide. One emotional response that has entered psychological research is eco-anxiety, which stems from concern over environmental events and the deteriorating state of our planet. Eco-anxiety can manifest in practical or debilitating forms, which can either lead to action or inaction, respectively, with the possibility of eco-anxiety becoming maladaptive. This study examined eco-anxiety, pro-environmental intentions and pro-environmental behaviours within the Maltese population, employing an explanatory sequential mixed methods research design, and adopting appraisal theory and the Campbell Paradigm of Attitudes as theoretical frameworks. The 13-item Hogg Eco-Anxiety Scale was utilised to identify eco-anxiety levels in 243 Maltese adults through an online questionnaire. Furthermore, we explored the relationships of eco-anxiety with pro-environmental intentions and behaviours, and climate change news exposure. Both pro-environmental intentions and behaviours exhibited positive correlations with eco-anxiety, although the latter relationship was less pronounced. Eco-anxiety positively and significantly correlated with climate change news exposure. Subsequently, we conducted four qualitative focus groups as part of the second phase, delving deeper into Maltese individuals' risk perception, efficacy beliefs, environment-related attitudes, and pro-environmental intentions and behaviours. Participants predominantly expressed negative emotions in response to ecological degradation. These negative emotions aligned with participants' perceived lack of environmental efficacy in addressing the crisis through personal and collective actions, despite their desire and intention to act in a pro-environmental manner. Participants discussed perceived costs and barriers to acting pro-environmentally, including inconvenience, cost and time, that frequently outweighed their positive attitudes towards such behaviour. In conclusion, our study highlights the importance of reframing the ecological crisis by promoting facilitators for pro-environmental behaviour, and encouraging active engagement, meaning-focused coping, and biospheric values. Such an approach would transform debilitating eco-anxiety into practical eco-anxiety, eco-hope, and eco-empathy. These findings have implications for both the fields of psychology and environmental conservation, offering insights into Maltese individuals' experiences with eco-anxiety, and promoting pro-environmental action.

**Keywords:** *Eco-anxiety, pro-environmental intentions, pro-environmental behaviours, environmental efficacy.*

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## **CO-LIVING AS A CHOICE FOR INDEPENDENT RETIRED WOMEN: HOPE FOR SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION**

**Marie J. Myers**

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### **Abstract**

In this paper we present the results of a study of a successful co-living project for independent retired women. As our societies are increasingly concerned with sustainable living, we see that aging populations are often overlooked. Yet there is going to be an increase on these populations. During COVID in the Canadian context, some grave concerns were raised around retirement homes. For instance, by not allowing visitors the aging, already feeling lonely, were further cut-off from needed family social contact. Living close together in their common space increased major health issues with higher percentages of death. There were also increasing numbers of fires with significant numbers of deaths. Moreover, retirement homes are costly. With increasing financial constraints in many countries, older people feel financial burdens and there is a need to reconsider the conditions in which older people are finding themselves. Spontaneous groupings and living together experiments have generally failed. Even friends living in a house together usually experience issues after a few years. We investigated the successful Babayaga House co-living model in Paris that has been successful for over 12 years to uncover characteristics that are favorable for such projects to continue to thrive. Through the analysis of journals and other documents found in the public domain we uncovered desirable attitudes and qualities to help identify social factors that can lead to such a sustainable governance model. The method used was qualitative. To understand the complexity of the underpinnings of the system we recruited volunteers to make regular journal entries over six months. We also carried out a literature search to identify recognized questionnaire models that could be useful to map out the criteria for our study. The journal entries and additional documentation from the public domain were analyzed for emergent themes. Then these were paired with relevant entries from the existing well-being questionnaires identified in the literature search. We discuss our findings and present an articulation of the main concepts behind the successful functioning of the French model, also taking into account some of the major issues identified. Among major themes uncovered were autonomy, collaboration, accountability, the need for a number of positive traits like positive emotions, positive relationships and positive thinking with a total of 33 themes.

**Keywords:** *Identifying characteristics, senior autonomous living in co-housing, wellness.*

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## HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY

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### A SOCIO-TECHNICAL SYSTEMS APPROACH FOR THE PREVENTION OF RETAINED FOREIGN OBJECTS (RFOs) IN HEALTHCARE

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#### **Abstract**

‘Never events’, like Retained Foreign Objects (RFOs) are typically rare but can lead to serious outcomes in healthcare. These can cause significant physical and psychological impact on the patient, financial cost to the state and personal cost and reputational damage to the medical practitioners who are often considered to be the ‘second victim’ of RFOs. While the rate and impact of RFO’s is recognised there is little understanding of the human and organisational factors leading to RFO’s or how to effectively manage them. The specific objectives of the research were as follows: (i) to analyse the problem and current practice in surgical and maternity settings; (ii) to develop hospital-specific RFO’s interventions; (iii) pilot implementation and evaluation and (iv) consolidate an overall implementation roadmap for implementation of proposed interventions. A Socio-Technical Systems (STS) Approach (Corrigan et al., 2018; McDonald et al., 2021) was deployed as a key framework for data gathering and analysis. This model examined the socio-technical system from the current state of RFOs – the “As is” picture and how it could be in the future – the “To-be” picture. The overall research design involved a qualitative, multi-phase, multi-disciplinary approach actively involving core clinical and managerial staff at two pilot hospital sites. A range of methods were used including semi-structured interviews; focus groups and observations across two hospital sites. Several critical issues were identified, such as lack of alignment in goals related to preserving the accuracy of the count, different approaches to formally approving the count, and the impact on patient transfers between locations. There was also a lack of common reporting of count discrepancies and insufficient feedback when such discrepancies were reported. Furthermore, there was a lack of an open culture where staff felt comfortable speaking up, and challenges related to interacting with formidable personalities. The socio-technical approach was very effective in identifying the key facilitators and challenges to managing RFO’s and this paper presents high level recommendations based on an STS approach.

**Keywords:** *Retained Foreign Objects, socio-technical systems, human factors, patient safety.*

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### PSYCHOLOGICAL BURDEN IN ATOPIC DERMATITIS PATIENTS

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#### **Abstract**

**Background:** Atopic dermatitis (AD) patients present a high prevalence of psychological distress. They experience discomfort due to visible erythema and intense pruritus affecting sleep, mood and relationship quality. Patients need both medical and psychological assistance to improve symptoms and stress coping. Psychodermatological approach implies the presence of both psychologist and dermatologist in the patient’s care process.

**Objective:** Given the anxiety and depression prevalence in AD patients and their possible influence on treatment adherence, the present ongoing study investigates the relationship between different treatments (i.e., standard vs. biological drugs) and both dermatological and psychological outcomes.

**Methods:** AD patients attending at the San Gallicano Dermatological Institute in Rome, Italy, between November 2022 and December 2023, were enrolled. Primary outcomes included the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS, range: 0-42), and its dimensions, i.e. depression and anxiety (range: 0-21). Dermatological Life Quality Index (DLQI, range: 0-30), Peak Pruritus Numerical Rating Scale (NRS, range: 0-10) and Eczema Area and Severity Index (EASI, range: 0-72) were also measured.

Results: Of the 112 AD patients enrolled 62 were female (55.4%), mean age was 29.4 years, ( $SD=13.6$ ). Most were students ( $N=45$ ; 40.2%). The majority were receiving biological therapy ( $N=63$ ; 56.3%), followed by topical ( $N=33$ ; 29.5%), or standard systemic treatment ( $N=8$ ; 7.1%). Outcomes' mean scores were: HADS,  $M=11.5$  ( $SD= 6.6$ ); anxiety,  $M=7.5$  ( $SD=4.1$ ); depression,  $M=3.4$  ( $SD=3.03$ ); DLQI,  $M=6.14$  ( $SD=6.3$ ); NRS,  $M=4.4$  ( $SD=3.2$ ); EASI,  $M=8.7$  ( $SD=11.1$ ). Over half of the participants ( $N=57$ , 50.9%) had an anxiety level above the cut-off. Biological therapy showed a positive effect on dermatological and psychological outcomes with a lower disease severity, lower mean level of anxiety, depression and pruritus compared to standard treatments. There were significant correlations between time on biological therapy, EASI ( $r=-0.38$   $p<0.05$ ), NRS ( $r=-0.42$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and DLQI ( $r=-0.044$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). No correlation emerged between time on biological therapy and anxiety.

Discussion: Preliminary data show that clinically relevant anxiety level is high in AD patients. Although recent biological therapies seem to be effective in reducing dermatological symptoms and improving quality of life in this population, greater attention should be given to AD distressed patients. In the next study phase, participants with an anxiety and/or depression score above the HADS cut-off ( $\geq 8$ ) will be offered psychological support. The clinical impact of this intervention will be also evaluated.

**Keywords:** *Atopic dermatitis, anxiety, depression, quality of life, psychodermatology.*

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## **EXPERIENCES ACCESSING HEALTHCARE AMONG 2SLGBTQIA+ PEOPLE IN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES**

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<sup>2</sup>*Psychology, University of New Brunswick Saint John (Canada)*

### **Abstract**

Members of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities experience pervasive barriers to accessing healthcare services, including discrimination, care providers lacking knowledge or training, and limited specialized care compared to the general population (Comeau et al., 2023; Tami et al., 2022). An online questionnaire was administered to 534 participants across Canada and the United States to assess experiences of healthcare access between 2SLGBTQIA+ and non-2SLGBTQIA+ respondents. The final sample was composed of 296 2SLGBTQIA+ participants and 238 non-2SLGBTQIA+ respondents. A series of Chi-square tests and t-tests were used to identify differences across the two groups. 2SLGBTQIA+ participants reported worse overall access to health services, difficulties affording, and were more likely to have unmet health needs compared to non-2SLGBTQIA+ respondents. Further, 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals were significantly more likely to experience a delay in receiving care and a negative impact on access due to the distance to healthcare. Interestingly, 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals were more likely to report having a mental healthcare provider, while also reporting significantly greater difficulty affording such care compared to non-2SLGBTQIA+. Importantly, no significant differences were found between the two groups on access to a primary healthcare provider and wait-times for health services. Results demonstrate the disparities in access to healthcare experienced by 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals and identified key barriers including distance and affordability. The results of this study highlight the unique health service needs of 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals and can be used to address key barriers to accessing care for marginalized communities.

**Keywords:** *Healthcare, access, sexual minority, gender minority, 2SLGBTQIA+.*

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## PSYCHOANALYSIS AND PSYCHOANALYTICAL PSYCHOTHERAPY

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### AN INVESTIGATION OF THE PSYCHODYNAMIC CONCEPTUALISATION AND TREATMENT OF MORAL MASOCHISM IN SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

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#### **Abstract**

The current study aimed at investigating the manner in which psychodynamic therapists conceptualise and treat moral masochism in patients suffering from substance use. Therapists' perceptions of the possible role moral masochism play in the cause and perpetuation of substance use and its implications for treatment were explored. Psychodynamic therapists' diverse ways of conceptualising moral masochism were compared and contrasted, and the manner in which they deal with the particular transference challenges faced when treating such patients was investigated. A qualitative methodology was adopted, in which five in-depth, semi-structured interviews with psychodynamic psychotherapists, whose work is informed by diverse psychodynamic theories and who have experience working with Substance Use Disorder, were conducted. Data was analysed by means of Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA), in accordance with the guidelines provided by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2016, 2021). The study yielded several key findings, including the existence of common factors linking moral masochism and substance use-related behaviours. Some of these common factors include dependency and feelings of inadequacy, the presence of aggression towards the self and others and the presence of a sense of disconnection and emptiness. Possible motives underlying the behaviours of patients suffering from moral masochism and engaging in substance use were also elicited as themes from the data, which shed light on how patients use such behaviours as coping strategies, defence mechanisms and as ways of achieving a temporary sense of control. Results also elucidate patients' need to expiate guilt, including religious guilt, which participants believed contributes to this behaviour. Essential considerations for therapists treating this patient group were also highlighted, including the relevance of recognising the self-sustaining cyclical nature of morally masochistic and substance use-related behaviours within patients. The key role of considering patients' full biopsychosocial context and how this may be feeding into their behaviours was also highlighted. Implications for treatment of this patient group included helping patients to develop ego strength and an internal locus of control, addressing guilt and helping patients relationally reconnect to themselves and others by encouraging personal growth and helping them to find meaning in their lives. The importance of reflexive practice in order to help navigate specific issues of transference and countertransference was also emphasised.

**Keywords:** *Substance Use Disorder, moral masochism, psychodynamic psychotherapists, reflexive thematic analysis.*

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### ANAIS NIN'S JOURNAL OF INCEST

**Michelle Morin-Odic**

*Dr, Psychosomatic (IPSO), Psychoanalysis (SPP) (France)*

#### **Abstract**

Anaïs Nin, thirty-three old, meets again with her beloved father, the pianist and composer Joachin Nin. She did not see him since the age of eleven. She then started to write a diary. I want to show that you can interpret the material of her diary like the material of a psychoanalysis. When they meet again, he behaves like an incestual father and commit incest. Through the Journal of the Incest and the Youth Journal, I will try to understand how such an incest can happen.

**Keywords:** *Incest, borderline state, psychosis.*

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## **ALTERNATIVE STORIES MAKING MASTER NARRATIVE CHANGE – TWO FEMINIST’S STORY FROM 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY GEORGIA**

**Mariam Gogichaishvili, & Lili Khechuashvili**

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### **Abstract**

We, as human beings, are storytellers by nature. We create a narrative identity, which is a self-defining and ever-evolving story about us, told for ourselves and others. Our narrative identity is formed in the cultural context in which we live and evolve; therefore, we try to fit our personal experiences into that particular cultural matrix or biographical master narrative. But what happens when our lived experiences are radically different from the stories that make up the “good life”? What happens to stories of lived lives that are alternative by nature and don’t fit into the culturally dominant master narrative? Do they remain within or with the master narrative? Or are they lost and forgotten in the cultural context?

The purpose of the study is to reveal the process of negotiation with the biographical master narrative and its internalization in the case of lived, non-normative life stories. Another goal of the study is to situate two subject case study data in the broader context of narrative inquiry within the narrative identity theoretical framework and the broader model of master narrative. It analyses the data obtained from the lives of two Georgian feminists back in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and traces the process of creating an alternative master narrative (which, in turn, serves as the avenue for overcoming stigma, achieving resocialization, and generativity) and its negotiation with an autobiographical master narrative.

The research addresses the following questions: how does one negotiate the alternative master narrative with the biographical master narrative in a person's life, and what happens to an already-lived alternative narrative? In other words, what remains after our lives?

**Keywords:** *Alternative master narrative, biographical master narrative, generativity, case study.*

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The background features a teal, textured surface with visible brushstrokes and some cracking. On the left side, there are large, expressive brushstrokes in shades of orange and red. A white square frame is positioned on the left, partially overlapping the orange brushstrokes. The word "Posters" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font, centered within the white square frame.

# Posters



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## CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

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### FLEXIBLE EXPRESSION OF EMOTIONS IN RELATION TO SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY IN EMERGING ADULTHOOD

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#### **Abstract**

In the realm of mental health research, understanding the interplay between emotion expression and psychological well-being remains a crucial endeavor. The theory suggests that suppression of emotion expression is generally a maladaptive emotion regulation strategy, but empirical studies are ambiguous about this claim. Recently, the concept of flexibility in emotion expression has been studied to overcome the limitations of rigidity connected with the concept of suppression of emotion expression. The purpose of this study was to explore associations between suppression of emotion expression, flexible emotion expression and symptoms of depression and anxiety. We administered self-report scales to participants ( $N = 836$ ) in emerging adulthood to measure suppression of emotion expression, flexible expression and suppression of emotion, and the presence of symptoms of depression and anxiety. We found that the presence of depression and anxiety symptoms was weakly positively related to suppression of emotion expression, but weakly negatively related to flexible suppression of emotion expression. We discuss the results in terms of assessing the adaptive nature of emotion regulation strategies.

**Keywords:** *Flexibility, expression of emotions, depression, anxiety, emerging adulthood.*

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### PRELIMINARY VALIDATION OF RUMINATION ON SADNESS SCALE IN POLAND

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*Institute of Psychology, The Maria Grzegorzewska University (Poland)*

#### **Abstract**

Rumination on sadness (RS) is a form of repetitive, intrusive thinking proneness about the past event evoking the feeling of sadness. RS is a major risk factor contributing to depression (Nolen-Hoeksema, 2000) and anxiety disorder (Nolen-Hoeksema et al., 2008). This study was to assess the psychometric properties of the Rumination on Sadness Scale (RSS; Conway, Csank, Holm & Blake, 2000) in a Polish non-clinical sample ( $N = 250$ ;  $Mage=22.42$ ;  $SD=6.54$ ). Participants were asked to complete a packet of questionnaires, which included RSS as well as the NEO-FFI questionnaire, a short form of the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS), General Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7), and Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9). First, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was run using the maximum likelihood estimation to find out whether the rumination construct measured by RSS applied to the Polish sample. Following the CFA, a one - factor solution was obtained, providing goodness-of-fit indices that corresponded well with the original model. RSS displayed excellent internal consistency ( $\alpha = .92$ ) and satisfying convergent validity assessed through the correlations with other constructs. Namely, RS correlated negatively with positive affect ( $r=-.35$ ,  $p<.001$ ), and positively with negative affect ( $r=.34$ ,  $p<.001$ ) while the correlation coefficients of RSS to GAD-7 and PHQ-9 were respectively  $r=.55$  ( $p<.001$ ), and  $r=.62$  ( $p<.001$ ). Finally, RSS was correlated with the big five personality traits, obtaining correlations ranging from  $r=-.13$ , ( $p<.05$ ) for RS and Agreeableness to  $r=.62$  ( $p<.001$ ) for RS and Neuroticism. Thus, the preliminary validation of RSS provided a strong premise that the psychometric properties of this scale obtained in the Polish sample are sufficient to use it in further research. Also, future research is needed to set up the standardized scores to be able to provide an individual diagnosis on rumination proneness since this sort of perseverative, intrusive thinking style has such far-reaching clinical consequences.

**Keywords:** *Rumination on sadness, depression, anxiety disorder, big five personality traits, negative affect, positive affect.*

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## EVALUATING CHATGPT'S DIAGNOSTIC CAPABILITIES FOR MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS

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### Abstract

The field of artificial intelligence (AI) has seen significant advancements in recent years, making it a notable technological achievement in various aspects of daily life. In this study, we sought to investigate the feasibility of employing AI in the realm of mental health. Specifically, we assessed the efficacy of ChatGPT as a diagnostic tool for mental health disorders. To this end, 25 vignettes depicting common mental disorders were presented to ChatGPT, and its diagnostic accuracy was evaluated across three experimental conditions (the original vignette, the vignette with gender switch, and a shortened version of the vignette). The results showed high accuracy rate, surpassing random guessing, and highlighted ChatGPT's adherence to specific diagnostic criteria. This accuracy persisted even when the vignettes depicted rare mental disorders. These findings are discussed with an emphasis on potential gender biases, the risks tied to self-diagnosis, and the pressing need for further validation and ethical considerations. The study concludes by addressing the potential for incorporating ChatGPT into the broader realm of mental health in the future.

**Keywords:** *ChatGPT, mental health, self-diagnose, artificial intelligence.*

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## PSYCHOMETRIC VALIDATION OF THE POLISH VERSION OF THE APPEARANCE SCHEMAS INVENTORY – REVISED

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<sup>2</sup>*University of Lleida (Spain)*

### Abstract

Developing the notion of 'appearance-related self-schemas' and its measurement, the Appearance Schemas Inventory (ASI; Cash & Labarge, 1996; ASI-R; Cash et al., 2004), has resulted in a vast body of research. Since the construct is culturally sensitive (Ambo et al., 2011; Argyrides & Kkeli, 2013; Chua et al., 2015; Rusticus et al., 2008; Smith & Davenport, 2012), the tool, before being used in research in a particular culture or study group, should undergo an adaptation and validation procedure. Therefore, in our study, we aimed to culturally adapt and validate the scale in a Polish non-clinical sample. The study was conducted by a nationwide research panel on two different samples of healthy adults ( $N = 713$ ). Participants were administered the ASI-R (Polish version), as well as the Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI, Gosling et al., 2003), the Social Desirability Scale (WSPAS; Fronczyk & Witkowska, 2020), the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (SES, 1995), the Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWB, Ryff & Singer, 1996), the Multidimensional Body-Self Relations Questionnaire (MBSRQ, Cash, 2000, 2018), and the Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance (SATAQ-4) (Schaefer et al., 2015). To verify the structural validity of the ASI-R, we tested a series of confirmatory factor analytic models using the robust maximum likelihood estimation in Mplus v. 7.2. (Muthen & Muthen, 2012). In order to check whether the structural model of the ASI-R reproduces equally well across genders, the multigroup CFA (MGCFA) was conducted. Finally, the theoretical validity of the ASI-R was assessed through correlations with appearance schemas-related constructs. The results of our study indicate that the Polish version of the scale, in contrast to the original one, exhibits a one-factor structure, however its psychometric properties are robust. The scale demonstrates high internal consistency and sound construct validity, established through correlations with various aspects of psychosocial functioning, along with body image and sociocultural attitudes toward appearance. It is gender-invariant and can be utilized in future studies that adopt a cognitive-behavioral approach to appearance schemas.

**Keywords:** *Appearance Schemas Inventory–Revised, appearance investment, appearance related self-schemas, body image, validation study, gender invariance.*

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## THE COMPUTERIZATION OF THE ABSTRACT AND SPATIAL REASONING TEST (ASRT)

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<sup>1</sup>Vassouras University (Brazil)

<sup>2</sup>Postgraduate Program in Psychology, Salgado de Oliveira University (Brazil)

### Abstract

The study aimed to adapt the Abstract and Spatial Reasoning Test (ASRT) for computerized administration while maintaining its original psychometric characteristics. Two samples were utilized: one to assess the latent structure in 540 eighth and ninth-grade students and another to evaluate the factorial structure and item parameters equivalence between the computerized and paper-and-pencil versions in 318 eighth and ninth-grade students. ASRT was computerized using Java, and Structural Equation Modeling indicated a unifactorial model's adequacy for the computerized version. Results partially confirmed the original instrument's bifactorial structure. Multigroup Confirmatory Factor Analysis demonstrated model invariance across different groups. In conclusion, the computerized ASRT showed evidence of satisfactory internal structure validity and equivalence to the theoretical model, with invariant item parameters between computerized and paper-and-pencil versions.

**Keywords:** *Intelligence, computerized testing, abstract reasoning, space reasoning.*

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## THE SITUATIONAL TEST OF EMOTIONAL FLEXIBILITY: THE EXPERT'S CONSENSUS ON THE EMOTION REGULATION STRATEGY EFFECTIVENESS

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### Abstract

The ability to effectively regulate emotions has emerged as an important protective factor for mental health. Current research provides insights into the maladaptive/adaptive nature of the selected emotion regulation strategies (e.g., cognitive reappraisal, suppression of emotion expression). The ambiguity of these findings suggests a protective factor of mental health may be an individual's ability to flexibly use different emotion regulation strategies depending on the situation evoking this emotion. However, measuring the flexibility of emotion regulation strategies is problematic due to the lack of measurements. The Situational Test of Emotional Flexibility (STEF) was created by the authors of the study, containing twelve pairs of situation scenarios eliciting three negative emotions (fear, sadness, and anger). Each pair of scenarios takes place in the same situation, changing only one aspect of the situation (e.g., the presence of other people). Participants are asked to consider six emotion regulation strategy effectiveness (acceptance, cognitive reappraisal, rumination, expression of emotion, ignoring, self-compassion) to regulate the evoked emotion for each scenario. STEF allows the assessment of the emotion regulation strategy flexibility in each scenario and also the assessment of the preferred emotion regulation strategy. This paper presents the results of an expert consensus on the effectiveness of six emotion regulation strategies via 24 scenarios. The research sample consisted of 19 experts (4 psychotherapists, 10 counselling/school psychologists, and 5 clinical psychologists) requiring at least five years of practice (M = 11.4 years) who assessed the effectiveness of using six emotion regulation strategies in 24 scenarios evoking fear, sadness, and anger. The results show that from the experts' perspective, self-compassion, expression of emotion, and cognitive reappraisal were the most effective emotion regulation strategies for all negative emotions. Ignoring emotion and rumination were the least effective strategies for all of them. The rank order of the effectiveness of the strategies showed slight differences separately for each emotion: anger, sadness, and fear. We discuss the results regarding the adaptive nature of emotion regulation strategies.

**Keywords:** *Flexibility, emotion regulation strategies, measurement, expert assessment.*

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## **DEPRESSION AND HIV INFECTION AMONG MSM: THE PERFECT STORM TOWARD CHEMSEX**

**Stella Capodiecì, Mauro Zaccarelli, Alessandra Latini, Christof Stingone,  
Maria Gabriella Donà, & Massimo Giuliani**

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### **Abstract**

**Introduction:** The chemsex represent a new phenomenon of sexualized-drug-use, mainly observed among European and North American communities of men who have sex with men (MSM). A chemsex session differs to the use of recreational drugs to promote sex by type of drugs utilized (i.e., GHB, crystal n-methylamphetamine and 4-methylmethacathinone), length (i.e., from several hour to some days), number and characteristics of participants (i.e., multiple partners, persons living with HIV-PLWH) and risks for health (i.e., sexually transmitted infections-STI, drug-addiction, overdose, and death).

**Objectives:** An in-depth survey was conducted to assess the prevalence, characteristics, and correlates of chemsex in MSM at risk for STIs.

**Methods:** A validated anonymous self-administered questionnaire, was proposed to consecutive MSM attending at the STI Center of San Gallicano Dermatological Institute in Rome, Italy. After informed consent, all participants were asked to fill out the questionnaire and to place it in a ballot box before leaving the center. The questionnaire was designed to investigate demographic, sexual, substance dependence and preventive behaviors in the participants. Also, the vulnerability for anxiety and depression was investigated in participants using the items of the PHQ-2 and of the GAD-2.

**Results:** From 1st to 30 November 2023, 129 MSM have accepted to fill out the questionnaire. Of the participants, 121 (93.8%) questionnaires were collected and validated. Eight questionnaires were excluded due to errors in filling out, multiple missing responses and cancellations. The median age between PLWH and non-PLWH was 45.5 (IQR=40-57) years and 45.0 (IQR=32-50) years, respectively. Fifty-six out 118 (47.5%) MSM tested for HIV, were PLWH. Chemsex was referred to by 25 (20.7%, C.I. 95%: 14.4-28.7) participants; 15 (26.8%, C.I. 95%: 17.0-39.6) PLWH and 10 (16.1%, C.I. 95%: 0.1-27.2) non-PLWH. MSM who have showed score above threshold ( $\geq 3$ ) to PHQ-2 were 17 (27.4%) and 15 (28.8%) between PLWH and non-PLWH, respectively. Scores above threshold to GAD-2 were measured in 28 (45.2%) and 20 (35.7%) PLWH and non-PLWH, respectively. Multistrata-analysis, using HIV status and scores to PHQ2 and GAD2, showed an association between to be above threshold to PHQ-2 and chemsex, at limit of the statistical significance (AOR= 1.65; 95%CI: 0.98-2.78).

**Conclusions:** Preliminary findings from the survey suggest that a high proportion of MSM at risk for STIs engaged in chemsex, particularly if PLWH. Moreover, depression seems to contribute to making MSM prone to chemsex behavior, despite these results should be reevaluated overtime on the expected larger study population.

**Keywords:** *HIV infection, MSM, chemsex, anxiety, depression.*

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## **GREATER POSITIVE FACIAL RESPONSES TO VIOLENCE IN HIGHLY-SEXIST PERPETRATORS: IMPACT ON IPVAV PREVALENCE**

**Javier Comes-Fayos<sup>1,3</sup>, Isabel Rodríguez Moreno<sup>1</sup>, Sara Bressanutti<sup>1</sup>, Carolina Sarrate Costa<sup>1</sup>,  
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### **Abstract**

Facial expressions have been posited as biologically primed responses to external emotional stimuli. It has been argued that a facial response aligned with the emotions of others would evidence good empathic functioning, predisposing adaptive social interactions. Previous research suggests that intimate partner violence against women (IPVAW) perpetrators display a misaligned expression pattern when facing women suffering (increased happy expressions, reduced sad expressions). However, the influence of significant IPVAV risk factors, such as sexism, on the emotional facial response of IPVAV perpetrators, as well as their impact on IPVAV prevalence, remains unclear. Our primary objective was to examine the emotional facial responses of two groups of IPVAV perpetrators (highly-sexist vs. less-sexist) when

witnessing violence against women. Furthermore, we assessed the predictive capacity of their emotional facial response on the IPVAV prevalence. The present study included 55 IPV perpetrators from the IPVAV CONTEXTO program. The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory was employed to classify the offenders based on their sexist attitudes, resulting in two groups: 28 highly-sexist perpetrators and 27 less-sexist perpetrators. For the emotional induction task, two IPVAV scenes were selected from a validated battery of emotion-eliciting videos. Facial recognition was conducted using the 'Noldus FaceReader Software,' capable of detecting Ekman's six basic emotions: sadness, anger, disgust, fear, surprise, and happiness. Finally, prevalence of IPVAV psychological aggression, physical aggression, and severe violence was obtained through the Revised-Conflict Tactic Scale. Independent t-tests were performed to compare the registered facial responses between groups. Additionally, a linear regression model was constructed with emotional facial responses as the independent variables and IPVAV prevalence as the dependent variable. As a result, a greater facial expression of happiness was registered in highly-sexist perpetrators following the IPVAV emotional induction task in comparison to less-sexist perpetrators. Remarkably, a greater facial expression of happiness during the task predicted an increased prevalence of IPVAV physical aggression and severe violence. There was no other significant outcome. Our findings suggest a greater tendency among highly-sexist perpetrators to express positive emotions in response to women's suffering. Furthermore, a happy facial response to IPVAV scenes predicted the prevalence of IPVAV severe violence across all perpetrators. This result holds particular significance, as it implies that maladjusted socio-affective response patterns may stem from hostile cognitive patterns, such as derogatory attitudes towards women. Considering this, IPVAV interventions could benefit from approaches that emphasize addressing both sexism and emotional responses.

**Keywords:** *IPVAV, emotional response, facial expressions, sexism, violence.*

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## **EXPRESSIVE WRITING AND MEDITATION ON TEST ANXIETY AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

**Hung Nguyen**

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### **Abstract**

Test anxiety, the emotional fear and wariness over performance that often occurs in specific evaluative situations, causes students to underperform relative to their actual ability, and hence interferes with the test's main objective of assessing students' academic progress and understanding level.

One intervention that has been documented to reduce general anxiety, depression symptoms and ruminative thoughts is expressive writing, a paradigm whereby writers freely write about their feelings and experiences associated with an undesirable situation. Experimented in classroom settings, a short period of expressing writing could help students reduce anxiety level and put up a better performance. However, in recent literature, effects of expressive writing are being challenged as it may not produce the desired effect size, and its impacts on students' performance and anxiety level tend to vary across different population. Therefore, the present study aims to account for underexplored individual characteristics, namely emotional expressiveness and suppression, in a real-stake testing conditions, while comparing expressive writing to another popular emotional regulation intervention: meditation.

Adopting a within-subjects design, the study finds preliminary results that students' ambivalence over emotional expressiveness and emotional suppression are positively correlated with test anxiety level. Treatment effects, although not significant, showed that participants felt less emotionally aroused after doing expressive writing, while their worry levels decreased after a breathing exercise. Moving forward, we aim to replicate the current design and conduct an online survey experiment to further investigate the effectiveness of meditation and expressive writing and the role of emotional suppression on test anxiety.

**Keywords:** *Test anxiety, expressive writing, emotional regulation, meditation, clinical psychology.*

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## DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF A SPEECH-BASED DIARY FOR DEPRESSION RELAPSE PREVENTION

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### Abstract

**Background.** Relapse is a significant risk among people treated for depression, with approximately 50% of patients experiencing a recurrence after their initial depressive episode. This risk increases with subsequent episodes. This alarming statistic underscores the urgent need for innovative, reliable tools to identify individuals at high risk of relapse for timely intervention. Leveraging the capabilities of machine learning to analyze speech patterns offers a novel pathway for early detection of changes in depression status to prevent relapse.

**Methods.** We trained two machine learning models on speech data from patients with depression. The first, a Depression Detection System (DDS), is trained on speech data from patients with four levels of depression, as assessed by the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) score (from non-depressed to severely depressed). The second, Speech Emotion Recognition (SER) model, employs deep learning techniques to identify seven basic emotions. Additionally, we developed a speech-based diary, where patients reflect on their week and address topics related to their condition. The recorded diary entries provide a rich dataset for our models to analyze depression-related voice parameters. This approach offers the opportunity to monitor changes in patients' symptoms and enables professionals to take timely action and prevent relapse.

**Results.** The performance of models achieved a satisfactory level, as measured by the *F1*-score (DDS: 81% averaged across four classes, and SER: 62% averaged across seven emotion classes). These results highlight the potential efficacy of our approach in the nuanced task of speech-based emotion and depression detection.

**Conclusion.** This innovative approach may serve as a reliable tool for relapse prevention in depression. Empowering both therapists and patients with valuable insights from weekly speech-based self-reflection, this method holds potential for early intervention. As a next step, clinical trials will be necessary to validate the effectiveness of this speech-based diary in preventing depression relapse.

**Keywords:** *Depression, relapse prevention, acoustic speech-analysis, machine learning, speech emotion recognition.*

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## THE PREVALENCE OF ADULT ADHD AND GENERALIZED ANXIETY DISORDER FOLLOWING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN A CLINICAL POPULATION

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### Abstract

ADHD is often comorbid with a range of other mental health disorders including anxiety-related conditions. Many clinical findings have reported increased rates in both ADHD and GAD diagnoses following the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of the present study was to examine a large Canadian clinical sample of adults with ADHD to explore the co-occurrence of anxiety disorders following the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Keywords:** *Anxiety, ADHD, COVID, prevalence, adult.*

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## EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

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### UNLOCKING CREATIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING WITH ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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*SWPS University, Wrocław Faculty of Psychology (Poland)*

#### **Abstract**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly used to facilitate creativity. Zoddy is an AI-assisted platform designed to help users generate innovative ideas and collaborate on creative projects. It offers a suite of tools that make creative processes much more efficient. For individuals, Zoddy makes it easier to come up with creative ideas and collaborate with others. For businesses, Zoddy can provide a competitive edge as it can help them to generate innovative ideas and collaborate on projects, saving time and money. We will present a case study of how to use Zoddy for business solutions. A problem-solving approach is taken that demonstrates how to move from problem identification to planning the implementation of developed solutions. Clearly, AI technologies can enhance human creativity and innovation. However, we also point out that this can have both positive and negative effects on the development of humanity.

**Keywords:** *Creative thinking, Artificial Intelligence, innovation.*

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### SUBJECTS THAT ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE AND STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE: MAPPING PORTUGUESE MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOLERS' PERCEPTIONS

**Marcelo Félix, Sara Miranda, Juliana Martins, & Jennifer Cunha**

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#### **Abstract**

Studies have focused on students' perceptions of the importance of school for their climate change (CC) learning, but there are still gaps concerning students' perceptions of which subjects address CC. This is particularly relevant in countries where the approach to including this topic is cross-curricular, as in Portugal. Therefore, this study aims to map the subject areas where Portuguese students have learned about CC. Additionally, it intends to analyze the relationship between the reported frequency of classes addressing CC and perceived CC knowledge. The potential differences between school levels are also analyzed. A questionnaire was administered to 582 Portuguese middle and high schoolers, comprising one open-ended question regarding students' subject areas and a four-item Likert scale on CC subjective knowledge. Frequency analysis, Mann-Whitney U tests for paired samples, and Spearman correlation tests were used to analyze the observed outcome variables. Across middle and high school, students consistently reported Citizenship, Sciences, Physical and Chemical Sciences, and Geography as the main subjects of CC learning. During high school years, students additionally reported Biology and Geology, English, and Portuguese classes. Students reported a similar average knowledge of CC across all school grades. A correlation analysis revealed a positive association between the perceived frequency of classes addressing CC and subjective knowledge of CC. Despite the cross-sectional nature of the current study, the cumulative opportunities to learn CC throughout schooling seem not to impact students' perceived knowledge as it remains average from Grades 7 to 12. This raises a reflection on how CC is being integrated into the school curriculum and its impact on students' knowledge.

**Keywords:** *Climate change, formal education, school curriculum, student's perceptions, subjective knowledge.*

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## **PREDICTORS OF STUDENT'S SENSE OF BELONGING AT SCHOOL WITHIN DIFFERENT GROUPS OF STUDENTS IN SLOVENIA**

**Klaudija Šterman Ivančič**

*Educational Research Institute (Slovenia)*

### **Abstract**

Sense of belonging at school refers to a student's subjective perception of the school environment. It has been confirmed in various studies as an important predictor of higher academic achievement and student well-being. The results from various international comparative studies in Slovenia (e.g. TIMSS, PIRLS, and PISA) show that students report a lower sense of belonging at school compared to the international averages, and as such need further investigation. The main aim of this paper is to gain a deeper understanding of the sense of belonging at school among Slovenian students by testing the explanatory model of students' sense of belonging at school that includes significant predictors already identified in other national and international studies and determined based on a broad literature review. In examining the effects of predictors of students' sense of belonging at school, the paper also examines the differences in the effects within different groups of students: according to students' gender, socioeconomic status, and immigration status. For the data analysis, we used the data from the PISA 2018 survey, which in Slovenia includes a representative sample of 6.24115-year-old students. From the 2018 questionnaire, we used separate scales addressing students' perceived disciplinary climate in the classroom, teacher's socio-emotional support, teacher's individual approach to teaching, discriminatory behavior of teachers, perceived competition amongst students, bullying, parental support, and frequency of students' positive emotions. All scales showed good internal consistency in the Slovenian sample. We used the linear regression procedure to analyse the size effects of different predictors when explaining students' sense of belonging at school within different groups of students. The multicollinearity between the variables was also checked before undertaking regression. Data were analysed using the statistical program IEA IDB Analyzer (Version 5.0.20), which, due to two-stage sampling in the PISA study, allows the use of individual students and sample weights to properly assess the standard parameter errors in the population using the Bootstrap method. The results showed that two predictors of students' sense of belonging at school had been confirmed as the most significant in the Slovenian context, regardless of students' gender, socio-economic status, and immigrant status: perceptions of students' bullying in schools and frequency of students' positive emotions. The results thus point to the importance of preventing bullying in schools and enhancing the socio-emotional well-being of students to promote a sense of belonging at school among different groups of students.

**Keywords:** *Sense of belonging at school, bullying, gender, socioeconomic status, immigrant status.*

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## **UNDERSTANDING MINDFUL TEACHING THROUGH TEACHER BURNOUT AND RELATIONAL COMPETENCE**

**Igor Peras, Manja Veldin, & Ana Kozina**

*Educational Research Institute (Slovenia)*

### **Abstract**

Teachers require a variety of skills and competencies to deliver effective teaching (Kaendler et al., 2015). Mindfulness-based approaches are recognized in continuous professional development programs for enhancing outcomes for both teachers and students (Roeser et al., 2012). Although mindfulness is typically viewed as an individual meditative practice (Creswell, 2017), it can also be effectively applied in social settings, particularly valuable for teachers in maintaining a presence in themselves and the classroom (i.e. on students when teaching). Teachers can practice mindfulness in teaching through intrapersonal mindfulness (focusing on one self's awareness, attentiveness and the present moment) and interpersonal mindfulness (having an open, accepting, and receptive approach to student-teacher interactions), with both types recognized as integral for effective teaching (Frank et al., 2016). In the present paper, we focus on teacher characteristics, namely teacher burnout and their relational competence, as potential contributors to mindful teaching. Although mindfulness is often used as an individual preventive strategy for burnout (Luken & Sammons, 2016), our focus is on how teacher burnout is connected to mindfulness during teaching. Moreover, relational competence considers the social aspect of the classrooms, as it encompasses how well the teachers use student-supportive leadership

to activate and motivate their students (Laursen & Nielsen, 2016). The sample includes 207 teachers from Slovenia (94,2 % female) who participated in the Erasmus KA3 project HAND ET: Empowering Teachers Across Europe to Deal with Social, Emotional and Diversity Related Career Challenges. Two multiple regression analyses were performed with interpersonal and intrapersonal mindfulness set as dependent variables. Burnout, relational competence and control variables (age, experience with mindfulness/inner exercises, experience with yoga/body exercises) were entered into the analyses in a step-wise procedure. The results show the predictors explain 36 % of the variance in interpersonal mindfulness and 21 % in intrapersonal mindfulness. Relational competence was a positive predictor of interpersonal mindfulness, while burnout was a negative predictor of intrapersonal mindfulness. Furthermore, age was inversely associated with intrapersonal mindfulness, suggesting that younger teachers may benefit from additional support. Findings are discussed through the lens of socio-emotional competencies also considering the practical implications.

**Keywords:** *Mindful teaching, relational competence, burnout, socio-emotional competencies.*

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## **BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF THE SCIENTIFIC EVALUATION OF ANTI-DOPING PRACTICE PROGRAMS**

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### **Abstract**

**Purpose:** The spirit of sport enables athletes to use their talents to the extreme and pursue human excellence ethically. Doping in sports is a well-known phenomenon that is studied primarily from a biomedical point of view, although socio-psychological approaches are also key factors in the fight against doping. Therefore, this study aims to evaluate the scientific results of global anti-doping research through bibliometric analysis to explore the hotspots and frontiers from 2003 to 2023.

**Methods:** Publications regarding the anti-doping research published from 2003 to 2023 were extracted from the Web of Science Core Collection CiteSpace software was based on the links between bibliometrics, scientific analysis publications, countries, institutions, journals, authors, references cited, and the number of hot words. By analyzing the network of associations and collaborations between countries, institutions, and authors, it explores keyword trends and conducts cluster analysis, which is subsequently mapped through visualization.

**Results:** A total of 1,526 articles were retrieved from 1 October 2003 to 1 October 2023. From 2015 to 2023, a total of 1,114 papers were published in the field of anti-doping, an average of about 123 per year. The International Testing Agency, developed and established during this period, became fully operational in July 2018 as an emerging global anti-doping initiative and is headquartered in Lausanne, Switzerland. At the end of 2014, the IOC and the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) were working together to establish a new International Anti-Doping Agency.

**Conclusion:** Focusing on the anti-doping prevention and control system, strengthening interdisciplinary and professional cooperation and research, and using artificial intelligence and big data technology to involve medicine and biotechnology, food safety industry, etc., to make more research contributions to effectively combat the abuse and misuse of doping.

**Funding:** This research was funded by the National Social Science Foundation of China (Grant Numbers 21BTY095) and this funding support for this article was sponsored by CX.

**Keywords:** *Anti-Doping Practice Program, research trends, bibliometric analysis.*

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## SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

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### FEAR'S ALTRUISTIC QUANDARY: UNRAVELING PRO-SOCIAL CHOICES

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#### Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic brought with it a tidal wave of fear and anxiety across the globe. As often depicted in movies and media, this created a situation in which people were predicted to act selfishly; however, the record amount of volunteerism during this time is at odds with the prediction. This research was designed to investigate the role of personal fear, collective fear, and empathy in determining individual behavior during a collective emergency. Two online research studies were conducted in which personal fear or collective fear was manipulated, and the desire to act in a prosocial way was measured. Results suggest a complex relationship between fear, empathy, and self-reported prosocial intentions. However, there was no impact on true behavioral measures of prosocial behavior.

**Keywords:** *Fear, prosocial behavior, empathy, collective emergency.*

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### INVOLUNTARY CAREER CHANGES. POSSIBLE MEANING AND COMBINATION OF RESOURCES FOR COPING

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#### Abstract

In a world of increasingly unstable, precarious, and uncertain work, involuntary career changes are multiplying (Masdonati et al., 2022; Pignault, 2022). Professional and personal career paths must be constantly adapted, re-imagined, and re-invented. When faced with these changes or discontinuities, individuals need to find responses that meet the expectations of the professional world and are acceptable to themselves. On the one hand, the aim of this study is to gain a better understanding of the meaning that involuntary career changes can ultimately take in a career and life path; on the other hand, to better identify the resources mobilised and combined (Csillik, 2017; Hobfoll, 2002) to cope with these events and attribute meaning to them. Ten career stories (Guichard, 2007; Savickas, 2005) were collected from individuals aged between 24 and 58 who had experienced involuntary career changes. These narratives, fully transcribed, were analysed using thematic content analysis and Iramuteq software. The results highlight the mobilisation of resources at different levels: social, psychological, and institutional. Several combinations of resources make it possible to cope with involuntary career changes, as well as trigger self-reflection. Reflective activity enables people to explore one's aspirations for the future and attribute or construct meaning to their experience and these career changes. These main categories are presented and discussed.

**Keywords:** *Career change, life story, meaning, resources, thematic analysis.*

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## **POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND PISA READING ACHIEVEMENT IN IMMIGRANT STUDENTS: THE CASE OF SLOVENIA, PORTUGAL AND HUNGARY**

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### **Abstract**

Using PISA 2018 data from Slovenia, Portugal, and Hungary, this article explores how the Positive Youth Development (PYD) model's 5Cs (competence, confidence, connection, character, caring) relate to reading achievement. Comparisons among first- and second-generation immigrants and native students reveal significant differences and commonalities in 5Cs and reading achievement across countries. The study emphasizes the need for tailored educational strategies, recognizing variations in predictors within and between student groups and countries, and urging policymakers and educators to create inclusive environments that support positive student development.

**Keywords:** *Positive youth development, 5Cs, PISA 2018, reading achievement, immigrant status.*

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## **REGULATORS OF DIGITAL STRAIN AND WELL-BEING IN THE ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT**

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### **Abstract**

Despite the benefits that information technologies bring to its users, the present working environment is becoming stressful for employees due to increasing digitalization and fast-changing modern technologies. The aim of this cross-sectional study was using Job Demands-Resources theory to verify the assumption that technostress inhibitors in the organization, a high level of resilience, and computer self-efficacy reduce the perception of digital load among employees and positively influence job related well-being, and technostress creators on the other hand increase employees' perception of digital load and are in a negative relationship with job related well-being. Research sample consisted of 183 employed people using information technologies at work, 87 men and 96 women, aged between 21 and 63 years. Participants were administered a battery of self-assessment online questionnaires via social media. Results showed that resilience, literacy facilitation, and technical support provision predicted positive job-related well-being, while negative job-related well-being was predicted by techno-overload, techno-invasion, techno-complexity, and techno-uncertainty. Resilience was found to be the only predictor that mitigated the effect of techno-stressors on positive well-being. Digital strain was predicted by techno-overload, techno-invasion, and techno-complexity, and computer self-efficacy was found to be the only significant predictor that mitigated the effect of techno-stressors on digital strain. Our findings have the potential to contribute to the creation of a better and healthier work environment, the optimization of technologic solutions, and the enhancement of employees' satisfaction and performance.

**Keywords:** *Techno-stressors, technostress inhibitors, resilience, computer self-efficacy, digital strain, job related well-being.*

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## THE DURATION OF ADOLESCENT PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS AND ITS ASSOCIATION WITH EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS IN EARLY ADULTHOOD: EVIDENCE FROM THE MILLENNIAL GENERATION IN NORTHERN TAIWAN

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** The indirect selection hypothesis proposes that early-life factors contribute to socioeconomic position and health status through individual social interaction and development. Accordingly, the main objective of the present study is to explore the impact of adolescent psychological distress on adult employment, including income and job satisfaction. Particular attention has been paid to the duration of adolescent psychological distress. To be specific, four research questions are investigated. Is the duration of adolescent psychological distress associated with their achieved employment status in early adulthood? Is there a correlation between adolescent psychological distress and receiving employment assistance in early adulthood? Among the employed sample, is the duration of adolescent psychological distress related to their adult income and job satisfaction? Furthermore, are there any gender differences in the aforementioned associations?

**Method:** We used data from the Taiwan Youth Project (TYP), a longitudinal panel survey that followed two cohorts of adolescents (i.e., 7th graders (J1) and 9th graders (J3)) from Northern Taiwan. In this study, we restricted to those who gave information on all major variables (N=1866) and the sub-sample of the employed (N=1693). We dichotomized (i.e., 2 = symptom) the mean score of the short version of the Symptom Checklist 90 Revised (SCL-90-R) measured in 9th grade, 12th grade, and senior year of college. The duration of adolescent psychological distress was created into three categories across these three measures: “no exposure” (no symptoms), “short duration” (symptoms at one-time point), and “long duration” (symptoms at two or more time points). At age 31, we assessed employment status (employed or not), employment assistance, income (monthly), and job satisfaction which was measured on a 4-point Likert scale ( $\alpha = 0.95$ ). In addition, several essential covariates were included (e.g., sex and family SES). We conducted linear regression analyses for continuous outcomes and logistic regression analyses for categorical outcomes.

**Results:** Young adults with a short duration of adolescent psychological distress were more likely than those who had no exposure to be employed during early adulthood (OR=1.96,  $p<0.006$ ). Sex moderated the relationship between adolescent psychological distress and working status in the interaction analysis. Among the working sample, young adults with a long adolescent psychological distress duration were more likely to report poor overall job satisfaction than those with no exposure ( $\beta=-0.11$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). A similar pattern was also observed for cognitive ( $\beta=-0.04$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) and affective job satisfaction ( $\beta=-0.10$ ,  $p<0.01$ ).

**Conclusion:** The association between job satisfaction in early adulthood is affected by the duration of psychological distress experienced in adolescence. The findings of this research highlight the need for support during the transition from adolescence to early adulthood for those who suffer from long-duration.

**Keywords:** *Adolescence, psychological distress, early adults, employment, longitudinal.*

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## **OPTIMISING THE ELECTRONIC PATIENT RECORD: A HUMAN FACTORS AND SYSTEMS THINKING APPROACH**

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### **Abstract**

Recent years have seen a rapid digitalisation of care in Irish hospital settings, with a particular focus on the introduction of an Electronic Patient Record (EPR). While the advantages of EPR over traditional paper health records are well-described in the literature, little consideration has been given to the impact of EPR implementation on clinical team working. Oftentimes, such systems have been introduced in organisations without preliminary understanding of the complex roles and relationships among clinicians, the points of contact in relation to care, and the shared clinical decision-making processes characteristic of multidisciplinary teams in acute care contexts. Human Factors psychology and Systems Thinking principles represent a critical lens through which to view and improve the usability and effectiveness of EPR systems. This mixed-methods doctoral research – to be conducted in a large urban teaching hospital – will incorporate a systematic literature review, anonymous online survey, semi-structured qualitative interviews, and non-participant ward round observations to inform a socio-technical systems analysis. This will be followed by participatory co-design sessions with information technology professionals and clinician (medical, nursing, and health and social care) end users. Findings from these initial studies will inform a small-scale pilot intervention. The ultimate aim of the body of research is to explore the potential for human-centred design methods to refine both the design and implementation of EPR, for the ultimate maximisation of user satisfaction, care quality, and patient safety.

**Keywords:** *Electronic patient record, user-centred design, human factors, socio-technical systems, health information technology.*

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## **NATION DIVIDED: HOW DO DEMOCRATIC AND REPUBLICAN VOTERS EXPERIENCE SHARED REALITY?**

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### **Abstract**

Shared reality with the nation (SR-N) is a subjective experience of having one's thoughts, emotions, and beliefs in common with other members in their nation. Shared reality is an important human motive because it serves basic relational and epistemic needs (i.e., it helps individuals feel connected with others and understand the world around them). However, escalating polarization poses a threat to achieving shared reality, jeopardizing social well-being. Research suggests that conservatives prioritize conformity and seek consensus in their group, leading to a stronger desire for shared reality. This paper describes a study involving 571 U.S. citizens, in which we examined how SR-N relates to national pride, trust, and loneliness. The results revealed that Democratic voters experienced less shared reality, lower national pride, and higher loneliness than Republicans. Path analysis showed that shared reality mediated relationships between political orientation and national pride, loneliness, and trust. This study underscores disparities in social well-being between Democratic and Republican voters, highlighting shared reality's role in mitigating polarization's adverse effects.

**Keywords:** *Shared reality, polarization, trust, Democrats, Republicans.*

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## SYRIAN REFUGEES IN BRAZIL: THE ISSUE OF GROUPS

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### Abstract

Refugees are people who are outside their countries because of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or social participation, and who are unable (or unwilling) to return home. According to data released by the Brazilian National Committee for Refugees in its eighth edition (BRASIL, 2023), between January 2011 and the end of 2022, Brazil had identified 65,840 people as refugees in Brazil. Among the main countries of nationality or habitual residence of people identified as refugees in the period from 2011 to 2022, Syria stood out, with a total of 3,762 asylum requests granted, following Venezuela, which stood out in recent years. Syrian refugees have acquired great magnitude and representation in the issue that involves the policy of reception and insertion of refugees throughout the world and in Brazil. The arrival of these refugees in Brazil caused different reactions and behaviors, including potential conflicts. Different habits and beliefs generated responses from curiosity to rejection, creating a collective thought and a way of looking at these individuals as a cohesive and undifferentiated group, often based on the idea of uniformity, ignoring their singularity, as they are quite different from each other. This work aimed to discuss, especially through reading the work done by Jesuíno (2004) and Cichoski (2017), the matter of how we see certain groups and their common and right away generalization that naturalizes this view with often preestablished standards without there being reflection and better knowledge about this group of people. This practice ignores the differences that exist within groups and tends to uniformize thoughts and conducts towards them, including providing the basis for the construction of public policies aimed at certain categories of people. Reading Bourdieu (Ortiz, 1983), in turn, opens a new horizon for understanding relationships in the same group and between distinct groups through field theory and the correlation of forces that is established from the symbolic capital acquired by the various social actors involved in these relations.

**Keywords:** *Social psychology, human rights, refugees.*

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## LEGAL PSYCHOLOGY

### HIGHER HEART RATE AND LOWER HEART RATE VARIABILITY IN OFFENDERS VS. CONTROL WOMEN DURING COMPASSION

Isabel Rodríguez Moreno, Sara Bressanutti, Javier Comes-Fayos, Concepción Blasco-Ros, Angel Romero-Martinez, & Luis Moya-Albiol

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#### Abstract

Research has identified the autonomic nervous system (ANS) as a mechanism underlying offending behavior. Heart rate (HR) has been proposed as a measure of the balance of the sympathetic (SNS) and parasympathetic (PNS) systems, while higher heart rate variability (HRV) is associated with PNS activation. Both measures have been linked to socio-affective processing in offenders. However, research has predominantly focused on men, with limited studies involving women. This study investigates potential differences in HR and HRV responses between offender women and control women during a virtual reality eliciting compassion ( $n = 30$  offenders, 30 control women). The task was divided into two phases to replicate the compassion construct, focusing on connecting with others' suffering and alleviating it. Groups did not differ in sociodemographic variables, anthropometric characteristics, and resting HR and HRV (measured by RMSSD, a time-domain index). Repeated measures analyses indicated that offenders exhibited higher HR than control women before and during the connection with suffering, and in the recovery period. Furthermore, they also showed a decreased HRV when connecting with others' suffering. These results would suggest that offender women had a higher SNS activation and lower PNS activation when connecting with suffering. Following the literature, this may show potential challenges in empathizing with the suffering of others. These findings underscore the importance of utilizing biomarkers to study risk and protective factors. Additionally, it might highlight the necessity for tailored programs to target these psychophysiological variances, such as biofeedback techniques, and improve compassion-related abilities among female offenders, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of gender-inclusive interventions in criminal contexts.

**Keywords:** *Offending, compassion, autonomous nervous system, heart rate, heart rate variability.*

### FATHER-CHILD RELATIONSHIP, PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM ACTIVITY AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR

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#### Abstract

Parent-child relationship has been widely known to have impacts on child's behavior. However, most of the prior work has focused on mothers, often neglecting fathers. In this study, we investigated the effect of father-child relationship on child's aggressive behavior, and the extent to which this association is influenced by child's autonomic arousal level. Adolescents (13-16 years;  $n = 83$ ) from the community reported on their aggressive behavior and their relationship with both parents. Their respiratory sinus arrhythmia (RSA), a measure of parasympathetic nervous system activity, were recorded during a 2-min rest period. We found that father discord was significantly associated with both proactive and reactive aggression, and the effect was stronger among children who had high resting RSA. Discordant relationship with mothers were not associated with either type of aggression, although mother discord was found to be associated with proactive aggression, but only in those with high RSA. Findings highlight the role of fathers in child rearing and provide further support to the biological sensitivity to the context theory (Boyce & Ellis, 2005) by demonstrating that negative parent-child relationships contribute to children's aggressive behavior among those who are more biologically susceptible to the impact of environment.

**Keywords:** *Aggression, biosocial, biological sensitivity to context, arousal, fathers.*

## COGNITIVE AND EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

### ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE-GENERATED ADVICE: HARD TO IDENTIFY AND PERCEIVED TO BE BETTER THAN HUMAN ADVICE

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#### Abstract

Background: The rapid advancement of Artificial intelligence (AI), exemplified by models like Chat-GPT, has increasingly made AI a go-to source for advice, raising urgent questions about the quality of AI advice, and whether we can distinguish it from human resources.

Aim: We conducted a study investigating participants' ability to differentiate between human and AI advice and two studies exploring the advice-giving capabilities of GPT models in general life advice.

Method: A web-scraping script was made with Python. With this, we created a database of quality advice requests-answer pairs extracted from the website reddit.com/r/advice. We then prompted AI models to answer these advice requests. This resulted in a dataset of 50 advice requests, each paired with four advice answers (Human, GPT3, GPT3.5 GPT4). In Study 1, participants were presented with advice requests along with advice. Their task was to indicate whether they believed the advice originated from a human or AI. In Study 2, participants were presented with advice requests accompanied by two pieces of advice. One piece of advice was always the human response, the other was randomly chosen from the AI models. Participants had to indicate which advice they found the most helpful. In Study 3 participants were presented with an advice request and advice from a random source. They were asked to rate the advice quality on four 1-item- scales (Helpfulness, Effectiveness, Appropriateness, Sensitivity).

Results: Study 1: Participants could only correctly identify above the chance level ( $p < .0001$ ) the human advice. Study 2: Participants preferred AI advice over human advice ( $p < .0001$ ). Study 3: Participants rated the AI advice quality significantly higher than human advice (Advice Quality,  $p < .00001$ ; Helpfulness  $p < .01$ , Appropriateness  $p < .01$ , Sensitivity  $p < .0001$ , Effectiveness  $p = .079$ ).

**Keywords:** *Advice, helpfulness, perception, artificial intelligence, AI detection.*

### MOTIVATION, DECISION-MAKING, AND SELF-REGULATORY PROCESSES IN THE DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS' ATTAINMENT OF EMERGING ADULTS

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#### Abstract

The period of emerging adulthood, between the ages of 20 and 30, is characterized by discovery, new possibilities but also instability, which is often reflected in the fluctuation of life plans due to a number of external or internal factors. Planning and achieving goals in key life domains can thus pose a great challenge during this period. However, until now, not much research attention has been paid to the specificities of goal attainment during the transition to adulthood. Therefore, in a larger longitudinal study of 150 participants aged 20 to 30 years ( $M = 23.5$ ;  $SD = 3.6$ ), we aimed to examine the moderating effect of decision-making styles on the relationship between autonomous motivation, controlled motivation, and changes in effort and action crisis related to goal attainment in core life domains of emerging adulthood. A statistically significant moderating effect of rational decision-making style was found on the relationship between controlled motivation and changes in effort to achieve educational goals. Furthermore, a significant moderating effect of intuitive decision-making style was found (a) on the relationship between autonomous motivation and changes in effort to achieve personal growth goals, (b) on the relationship between autonomous motivation and changes in action crisis when achieving educational and relationship/family goals, and (c) on the relationship between controlled motivation and changes in action crisis when achieving relationship/family goals. Additionally, a statistically significant moderating effect of avoidant decision-making style was found on the relationship between controlled motivation and changes in action crisis when achieving personal growth goals. As such, the results

pointed out the importance of understanding the motivation and decisional tendencies of emerging adults in the context of the changes that can subsequently occur in exerting effort and overcoming obstacles when achieving goals from various life domains. These findings contribute to existing knowledge and can not only stimulate further research studies but can also be applied in training activities aimed at self-development and adaptive techniques used for setting and achieving goals of emerging adults.

**Keywords:** *Motivation, decision-making, action crisis, emerging adulthood.*

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## **ASSESSING 12-MONTH-OLD INFANTS' ABILITY TO ATTEND TO OCCLUSION CHANGE-DETECTION EVENTS IN A VIRTUAL SETTING**

**Cecilia Nam, & Sandra Waxman**

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### **Abstract**

By 12-months, the way infants remember and represent an object is heavily affected by the way the object is named. When infants are shown different objects with different labels from the same category, they encode the distinctions among them, but not when they are given the same labels. Evidence has supported that infants' sensitivity to changes in objects is affected by how they mentally categorize the objects. But how robust are their representations of that object? To address this, the LaTourette & Waxman paradigm will be adapted by adding an occlusion task to test 12-month-old infants' representation of the distinct individuals in a virtual setting. But first, to ensure that even at only 12 months, infants are able to attend to these objects in a virtual environment, we ran a pilot experiment showing only the occlusion tasks to confirm that infants are able to look at the paradigm significantly above chance. 80 infants were shown four occlusion events in the virtual laboratory Lookit. In the occlusion event, one object was soon hidden from view with a descending screen and then reappeared as either the same or a different object. Infants' looking behavior was then coded frame-by-frame to determine whether the infant was attentive during the trials. Data supported that infants, even at 12-months, are attentive enough to this occlusion task even in a virtual setting. With the data from the pilot study in mind, the next phase of this study implemented the full paradigm: infants are shown four different objects labeled with either a same or distinct name, and then the objects are soon occluded from view, reappearing as either the same or a different object. Via the violation-of-expectations paradigm, infants tend to look longer at events they find interesting or surprising. Thus, we predict that infants who are given a distinct label – but not the same label – will be surprised at the object change trials. Data collection, still underway, is promising. If they are given distinct labels, remembering the individual object would suggest that infants' representation of the object is robust enough to be retained over an occlusion task. Further investigation comparing infants' abilities to detect the object change depending on whether they are given distinct or consistent names will provide an additional test for this claim.

**Keywords:** *Attention, occlusion, virtual, development, infancy.*

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## **TIME PRESSURE AND INSTINCTIVE RESPONSES TO DRIVING DILEMMAS**

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### **Abstract**

The rapid advancement of autonomous vehicles (AVs) raises concerns about how machines make moral decisions. When a collision is unavoidable, the nature and way AVs crash become a critical ethical issue because AV algorithms select a specific course of action from a range of options. The Asilomar AI Principles advocate that machine ethics should align with human values. With no consensus on ethical standards, studying how humans make decisions in moral dilemmas aims to bridge the gap between human morality and moral algorithms' design. This line of research serves as a crucial reference for the development of ethical algorithms for autonomous vehicles. Previous research demonstrates a discrepancy in whether participants always make utilitarian choices (u-choices) in driving. This study

explored how time pressure influenced decision-making, particularly utilitarian decision-making in driving dilemmas. U-choices maximize lives saved and minimize harm. Participants were given 2 s, 3 s, or 5 s to decide how to respond to a driving dilemma in which one pedestrian (ped) was on one side and five peds were on the other side of the road. Thirty-one undergraduates participated in the study and responded to driving moral dilemmas at three different levels of time pressure, and drivers' behavior was measured and recorded in a STISIM driving simulator. The findings highlight the prevalent trend of individuals generally favoring u-choices, except during the first scenario. Moreover, decreased time pressure did not significantly increase the percentage of u-choices, but u-choices increased if excluding the first scenario (with 5 s to respond, one ped on the left). Future studies are needed to determine how participants' exposure to moral dilemmas influences decision-making. Additionally, we investigated whether drivers rely on an instinctive response in driving dilemmas. Most participants responded toward the direction that was consistent with u-choices. The findings have potential implications and applications in aligning machine ethics with human values.

**Keywords:** *Autonomous vehicles, decision making, time pressure, moral dilemmas, driving simulator.*

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## **LONELINESS AND MOTOR CONTROL: FIELD AND LAB INVESTIGATIONS**

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### **Abstract**

Loneliness has been argued to burden the cognitive system, diverting attentional resources towards the search for social cues. Loneliness has been also linked to impaired motor control, evident in slower walking speeds and compromised postural balance. However, previous studies connecting loneliness with motor control predominantly involved older adults and did not consider the role of cognitive load. This study was designed to explore the relationship between loneliness and motor control in young and middle-aged adults, taking into account cognitive resource availability. In Study 1, 123 participants aged 21-59 underwent field evaluations involving static and dynamic balance tasks within single- and dual-task paradigms, allowing for the calculation of attentional costs on motor control. Levels of Social, Familial, and Romantic loneliness were also assessed. Results indicated that social loneliness predicted increased attentional costs in dynamic balance tasks, suggesting that participants with higher loneliness scores found these tasks more challenging under dual-task conditions. Performance in static balance tasks decreased in relation to romantic loneliness, under both single and dual-task conditions. In Study 2, 59 participants aged 19-44 completed the UCLA loneliness scale and a postural stability assessment using a Tetrax system. Findings revealed a correlation between loneliness and a left-side weight distribution bias, particularly in tasks performed with closed eyes. Altogether, these findings support the right-hemisphere cognitive overload hypothesis of loneliness, offer a detailed examination of how loneliness might interact with motor control mechanisms, and generalize previous findings to young and middle-aged adults.

**Keywords:** *Loneliness, motor control, static balance, dynamic balance, Tetrax.*

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## ENVIRONMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

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### ENVIRONMENTAL MEMORY AND CONSERVATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIORS

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#### **Abstract**

Exposure to nature during childhood promotes mental and physical well-being in pro-environmental attitudes (Van Heezik et al., 2021). Different factors can also contribute: time spent in nature, preference for landscapes, exposure to biodiversity as well as the connection with nature. It is therefore important to understand the events experienced during childhood and which will shape environmentally conscious attitudes in adulthood in order to promote ecological values, protection and restoration of the environment (Wells & Lekies, 2006). This is the first study to integrate different components: environmental moral (which includes attitudes and values) and memory. A total of 100 adults aged 17 to 80 years ( $M = 35$  years and 4 months,  $ET = 10.7$ ) participated in the study. They were recruited by survey on social network. The material of our study consists of two questionnaires in order to be able to identify values, attitudes towards the environment (Moussaoui et al., 2016) and whether adults who had one or more experiences during their childhood reactivated the patterns left in their memory concerning environmental behavior (Wells, & Lekies, 2006). Regarding childhood experience, individuals had a positive experience with nature when they were accompanied by someone. Environmental education was also part of their involvement. After correlation analysis, adults who have had nature-related experiences and attachment will tend to have more pronounced pro-environmental attitudes and values than adults who have not had direct experiences with nature. The results highlight that individuals have environmental attitudes and values (such as protection, admiration and aesthetic values). Individuals have therefore kept a trace in memory which allows them to have an environmental morality based on attitudes and values transmitted during childhood. In future research, it would be interesting to delve deeper into the elements on environmental activities in nature at school in a longitudinal approach.

**Keywords:** *Environmental memory, childhood, adulthood, behaviors, environmental moral.*

### ADOLESCENTS' CLIMATE CHANGE PERCEPTIONS: DO CLIMATE CHANGE LEARNING AND ENGAGING IN ENVIRONMENT-RELATED GROUPS MATTER?

**Marcelo Félix, Sara Miranda, Pedro Rosário, & Jennifer Cunha**

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#### **Abstract**

Previous research suggested that improved climate change (CC) knowledge contributes to youths' awareness of its impact and predicts concern. Formal education institutions have played a fundamental role in CC education and have made efforts to promote awareness and literacy on the topic. Studies have also shown the potential complementary effect of non-formal and informal settings. The purpose of this study is to analyze the influence of learning CC in school and engagement in environmental groups on adolescents' CC subjective knowledge and concern, as well as on the perceived impact of CC in their lives. A questionnaire was applied to 209 Portuguese early and middle adolescents, aged between 11 and 18 years old. Participants were split into three groups: Group 1 comprised adolescents who self-reported no prior CC learning; Group 2 included participants who reported only previous CC learning in school; and Group 3 comprised participants who reported previous CC learning in school and had been engaged in environmental groups. The results showed Group 1 reported the lowest CC knowledge, followed by Groups 2 and 3. Moreover, Group 1 reported lower CC concern than Groups 2 and 3. The differences between Groups 2 and 3 were not statistically different. Lastly, Group 1 reported experiencing CC less frequently and with lower intensity compared to Groups 2 and 3. Differences between Groups 2 and 3 were not statistically different in these two variables. Despite the limited sample, the current study

highlights the differentiated contribution of formal and informal environmental education in Portugal. Learning about CC in school is essential to building adolescents' knowledge about this issue, and engaging in environmental groups seems to expand this positive impact.

**Keywords:** *Adolescence, Climate Change, environmental engagement, formal education, perceptions.*

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## HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY

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### EGO STATES AND TENDENCY TOWARDS PSYCHOSOMATICS

**Kristina Randelović, Miljana Nikolić, & Jelisaveta Todorović**

*Department of Psychology, University of Niš (Serbia)*

#### **Abstract**

Ego states are a set of behaviors, thoughts and feelings that represent part of an individual's personality. Transactional analysis describes three ego states: Adult, Parent, and Child (behaves, thinks and feels the way the individual used to feel when he was a child). The question is whether it is possible to predict psychosomatic tendencies with the help of ego state, which was the goal of this research. The sample was consisting of 291 respondents ( $N_{\text{male}} = 27.5\%$ ,  $N_{\text{female}} = 72.5\%$ ), while the average age was 19.19 ( $SD = 1.37$ ). The instruments used in the research were the Ego State Test and the HI Psychosomatic Propensity Test. All ego states, with the exception of the Nurturing Parent ego state, are significantly related to psychosomatic tendencies ( $p < .05$ ). The Critical Parent ego state and the Adapted Child ego state positively correlate with psychosomatic tendencies, while the Adult and Free Child ego states correlate negatively with the same. The model composed of ego states explained 25% of the criterion variance ( $R^2 = .25$ ,  $F_{5, 214} = 14.14$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Statistically significant predictors of tendency towards psychosomatics were an Adult ego state ( $\beta = -.16$ ,  $t = -2.22$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and Adopted child ego state ( $\beta = .45$ ,  $t = 6.40$ ,  $p < .01$ ). More pronounced Critical Parent ego state and an Adapted Child ego state are associated with a higher tendency towards psychosomatics, while an Adult ego state and a Free Child are associated with a lower tendency towards psychosomatics.

**Keywords:** *Ego states, tendency to psychosomatics.*

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### PERSONALITY TRAITS AND TENDENCY TOWARDS PSYCHOSOMATICS

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#### **Abstract**

Psychosomatic diseases are physical diseases but psychological factors play an important role in their origin. Notable examples of psychosomatic diseases are skin diseases, diseases of the gastrointestinal tract, diseases of the respiratory organs and blood vessels, as well as diseases of glands with internal secretion and rheumatic diseases. The question is which personality traits are associated with a tendency towards psychosomatics. So, this research aimed to examine whether personality traits (activity, aggressiveness, sensations, neuroticism, sociability) can be used to predict a tendency towards psychosomatics. The sample was convenient and consisted of 291 respondents ( $M = 27.5\%$ ,  $F = 72.5\%$ ). The average age of the respondents was 19.19 years ( $SD = 1.37$ ). The instruments included the ZKPQ questionnaire designed to measure basic personality traits and the HI psychosomatic tendency test. Aggressiveness, sociability, and neuroticism are statistically significantly related to psychosomatic tendencies ( $p < .05$ ). Aggressiveness and neuroticism are positively related to psychosomatic tendencies, while sociability is negatively related. The model composed of personality traits explains 36% of the criterion variance ( $R^2 = .36$ ,  $F_{5, 164} = 18.24$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Neuroticism ( $\beta = .42$ ,  $t = 6.17$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and sociability ( $\beta = -.32$ ,  $t = -4.35$ ,  $p < .01$ ) stood out as significant predictors of psychosomatic tendencies. Higher aggressiveness and neuroticism, as well as less pronounced sociability, are associated with a greater tendency towards psychosomatics. Recognizing personal factors associated with psychosomatic tendencies at a younger age represents an important contribution to creating preventive programs that can focus on teaching students how to deal with their own emotions and express them in a socially desirable way.

**Keywords:** *Personality traits, tendency to psychosomaticism, adolescents.*

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## LEADERS AND FOLLOWERS' DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES OF REMOTE VERSUS OFFICE WORKING AND ITS INFLUENCE ON WELL-BEING

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<sup>2</sup>DCU Business School, Dublin City University (Ireland)

### Abstract

Is the experience of working from home versus working in the office in a hybrid working model, different for leaders in contrast to employees? and how do these differences influence their well-being? Given that leaders and employee roles have very different demands, the context of recent transitions to hybrid working may have significantly different impacts, personally and professionally, for the two groups. Focusing on four aspects of working, namely, workload, perceived job autonomy, and perceived isolation, and overall well-being, we study the different experiences of leaders and their followers as they engage in homeworking versus "office" based working. Results from the first two waves of a longitudinal study in a tertiary education setting (n = 665 & 432) suggest that home versus office working does influence well-being with unexpected positive increments from office working even though office work is associated with increased workload for both leaders and followers. These results are discussed in light of the on-going debate regarding the effects of different forms of working (remote, hybrid, office) on worker well-being.

**Keywords:** Hybrid work, wellbeing, workload, job autonomy, isolation, leader and employee.

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## STUDENTS CO-DESIGNING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A DIGITAL MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM: INSIGHTS FROM SLOVENIA

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Educational Research Institute (Slovenia)

### Abstract

The pandemic-induced decline in the mental health of children and adolescents (Raccanello et al., 2022) underscores the necessity for effective, evidence-based programs promoting their mental health and resilience. The use of digital technologies by youth is increasing (Sevilla-Llewellyn-Jones et al., 2018), which has also led to the emergence of digital prevention programs that effectively address mental health issues (Wright et al., 2023). When tailored to the target group's specific needs, these programs provide flexibility, anonymity, and engagement, facilitating the transfer of skills into daily life (Lucas-Thompson et al., 2019). As part of the Erasmus+ project me\_HeLi-D, we are designing a digital program for mental health and mental health literacy through a participatory approach, involving Austrian, Slovenian, and Polish students (12 to 15 years old). A key objective of this initiative is to enhance students' mental health literacy and well-being, emphasising that integrating technology, addressing youth-specific needs, and considering students' preferences are important for enhancing the effectiveness of digital programs (Baños et al., 2017). Two participatory workshops were held in three project partner schools, involving the end-users in identifying needs, generating ideas, and designing programme characteristics. We present the results from the second workshop conducted with 36 students from Slovenia attending the 7th/8th year of schooling. One of the participatory activities in the workshop included filling out feedback forms for students, featuring both closed and open-ended questions about the program's design. Students were asked to discuss avatars and their attributes, envision natural landscapes for presenting mental health components, and provide insights into how they wish to monitor their progress and achievements within the program. Analysing the open-ended questions, specific categories emerged related to the portrayal of natural landscapes (e.g., bodies of water) or the exclusion of certain visual elements (e.g., pollution) in the digital program. A majority of students expressed a preference for customizable avatars (e.g., clothing options). They indicated a desire for the main character to be human while the side character should be a cartoon figure or being. Tracking of progress should be presented with points and achievements as rewards. Our approach is designed to offer a digital tool that is tailored and captivating for the target age group, with the goal of enhancing the user experience and nonetheless overall effectiveness.

**Keywords:** Mental health, digital program, youth, co-design, participatory workshops.

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## **THE SOMATICALLY ILL CHILD: HOW TO SUPPORT THEM PSYCHOLOGICALLY IN PROPER ADAPTATION TO THE LIFE SITUATION?**

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### **Abstract**

In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of children and adolescents with chronic somatic diseases (Barrio Cortes et al., 2020). Somatic diseases of a chronic nature are characterized by a long duration and the need for ongoing, systematic treatment, which usually changes the rhythm of life for both the child and his or her family and the way they function in different spheres of life (Leeman et al., 2016; Miniszewska, 2020; Sand, Dellenmark Blom, Forsander, & Sparud Lundin, 2018). As a result, some normative childhood experiences may not be shared by sick children, and their development may follow a different developmental trajectory (Kelly & Frosch, 2013). Regardless of the type of somatic illness, at each developmental stage, changes resulting from the illness occur in the sick child's body, psyche, and interactions with the closer and further social environment (Cobham et al., 2020; Kogon et al., 2016; Pascali et al., 2018; Pinquart, 2019). The occurrence of an illness in a child carries potential risks (Cohn et al., 2020; Pankowska, 2017), but does not prejudice the inability to adapt properly to the life situation (Wu et al., 2019). Hence, it seems important to increase knowledge in this area and to provide appropriate professional psychological support to children with somatic illness and their families (Law, Fisher, Eccleston, & Palermo, 2019). The aim of this poster is to present – on the basis of current reports from research and psychological practice – the impact of somatic illness on the child's functioning in different spheres in relation to the different developmental stages (Cerutti et al., 2017; Marek-Banach, 2022; Puffer, Schatz, & Roberts, 2016) and psychological interventions recommended according to the needs of the sick child and his or her family, such as prevention activities in the framework of health promotion, crisis intervention, counselling or psychotherapy (Anclair, Lappalainen, Muotka, & Hiltunen, 2018; Day, Clarke, Castillo-Eito, & Rowe, 2020; Feldman et al., 2018), effective in reducing the stress and suffering experienced, in coping with the illness and its symptoms and in improving the mental health and quality of life of somatically ill children and their caregivers (Eccleston, Fisher, Law, Bartlett, & Palermo, 2015; Graham, Gouick, Krahé, & Gillanders, 2016; Law et al., 2019).

**Keywords:** *Somatic disease of the child, stages of development, functioning in different spheres, family, psychological support.*

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## **A SECONDARY ANALYSIS OF A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW ON NOCTURNAL CAREGIVING FOR JUVENILES WITH TYPE 1 DIABETES - FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE LIVED EXPERIENCE**

**Vivienne Howard<sup>1</sup>, Rebecca Maguire<sup>2</sup>, & Siobhán Corrigan<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>*School of Psychology, Trinity College Dublin (Ireland)*

<sup>2</sup>*School of Psychology, Maynooth University (Ireland)*

### **Abstract**

The nocturnal caregiving burden for parents of juveniles with Type 1 Diabetes (T1D) is significant but underexplored in research to date. To address this, a systematic literature review (SLR) was carried out to capture and aggregate relevant data. This paper describes a secondary, mixed-methods analysis of the 31 publications identified in this SLR, utilising an 'engaged research' approach, whereby a patient-researcher carried out the analysis in collaborations with a panel of patient experts. The aim was to respond to the research, interpret the findings and identify issues, through the lens of lived experience. Using thematic analysis, five high-level themes were identified: 1. Distributed knowledge; 2. Maternal burden; 3. Are these conclusions relevant for me?; 4. What about the confounders?; and 5. Outstanding questions. Findings could be helpful for directing future research designs in juvenile T1D and facilitating study outcomes that more accurately reflect the concerns and interests of parent caregivers and their children. This research has demonstrated the value of patient participation in every stage of the health research process.

**Keywords:** *Paediatric Type 1 Diabetes, nocturnal caregiving, engaged research, PPI.*

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## PSYCHOANALYSIS AND PSYCHOANALYTICAL PSYCHOTHERAPY

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### HELP-SEEKING INTENTIONS OF SLOVAK UNIVERSITY STUDENTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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#### Abstract

*Background:* The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on higher education and the lives of university students. This population is often considered vulnerable, with a lower propensity to seek and experience help. *Aim:* The present study aims to investigate the help-seeking intentions and experiences of Slovak university students during the COVID-19 pandemic and other associated factors. *Methods:* During November and December of 2021, 258 students (mean age = 21.86, SD = 2.05; 77.1% women) from Slovak universities participated in an online survey propagated across online Facebook university campus groups in Slovakia. The General Help-seeking Questionnaire (GHSQ) was used to assess students' intentions to seek help (specifically within the next 4 weeks) if they were experiencing a personal or emotional problem. Each source was treated as a separate scale, and an overall scale including all sources of help was utilized. A supplementary question was also included within the GHSQ to assess past help-seeking experiences. The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) and the Fear of COVID-19 Scale (FCS) were employed in this study. Findings were analysed using the Mann-Whitney U Test and (multiple) linear regression. *Results:* We identified three primary help sources that are likely to be accessed by students when they experience a personal or emotional problem during the COVID-19 pandemic. These sources include informal help from their partner, friends, and parents. The lowest tendency of intentions was to seek help from teachers when students were experiencing a personal or emotional problem. The results indicated that women had a higher tendency of intentions to seek help from informal sources (partner, parents, other relatives) than men. Students with lifetime formal help-seeking experiences (28.2%) had a higher tendency of intentions to seek help from formal sources (such as mental health professionals) than students without lifetime help-seeking experiences. Multiple linear regression revealed associations between gender, satisfaction with life, fear of COVID-19, and help-seeking intentions. Women and students with higher levels of SWLS and FCS exhibited a higher level of help-seeking intentions. *Conclusion:* The results of this study support previous findings related to the willingness of young people, especially to use informal sources for help-seeking. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need to improve mental health literacy among university students.

**Keywords:** *Help-seeking intentions, satisfaction with life, university students, COVID-19.*

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The background features a teal, textured surface with visible brushstrokes and some cracking. On the left side, there are large, expressive brushstrokes in shades of orange and red. A white square frame is positioned on the left, partially overlapping the orange brushstrokes. The text "Virtual Presentations" is centered in the middle of the image.

# Virtual Presentations



## CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

### ELKINS HYPNOTIZABILITY SCALE: ADAPTATION OF THE FRENCH VERSION

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#### Abstract

This study aims to adapt the Elkins Hypnotizability Scale (EHS, Elkins et al., 2015) to a French sample and to determine its psychometric properties. The EHS was conceived in order to assess individuals' responsiveness towards suggestions guiding hypnotic experiments, ranging from motor responses to imagery and hypnotic amnesia. We also investigated the role of social desirability, attitudes and beliefs towards hypnosis, and vividness of visual imagery on individuals' hypnotizability level. Usually, these factor effects are considered in the light of hypnotizability (see Bret et al., 2023; Koep et al., 2020). Preliminary results revealed that the French version of EHS showed a good internal consistency. The gender effect on EHS scores was not significant. A significant, moderate and positive correlation between the EHS and the attitudes/beliefs towards hypnosis suggest that attitudes/beliefs might predict efficiently the responsiveness to hypnotic suggestions. A moderate and a positive correlation was found between the EHS and the vividness of visual images, no significant correlation was found between the social desirability and the EHS scale, confirming its relevance. These findings tend to show that the French adaptation of the EHS may be an available brief assessment of hypnotic suggestibility, useful for researchers and clinical practitioners.

**Keywords:** Attitudes, beliefs, hypnosis, hypnotizability, suggestibility.

### CHILDHOOD EMOTIONAL ABUSE AND PROBLEMATIC INTERNET USE: TRAIT MINDFULNESS AND DISSOCIATIVE EXPERIENCES AS MEDIATORS

Valeria Verrastro<sup>1</sup>, Valeria Saladino<sup>2</sup>, Danilo Calaresi<sup>1</sup>, Janine Gullo<sup>1</sup>, & Francesca Cuzzocrea<sup>1</sup>

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#### Abstract

The escalating prevalence of internet usage has prompted a heightened curiosity in comprehending the factors contributing to problematic internet use (PIU). Specifically, the study delves into the potential link between childhood emotional abuse (CEA) and PIU based on the Compensatory Internet Use Theory (CIUT), recognizing CEA as a precursor to mental health issues, with PIU as a possible coping mechanism. Additionally, the research explores the mediating roles of trait mindfulness (TM) and dissociative experiences (DE), hypothesizing that trait mindfulness may provide adaptive coping strategies, while dissociative experiences may lead to avoidance behaviors like excessive internet use. The study enlisted 1074 Italian adolescents (537 girls) aged between 14 and 17 years ( $M = 15.65$ ,  $SD = .92$ ). Participants filled out the following self-report instruments: Childhood Emotional Abuse Subscale from the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire-Short Form (CTQ-SF), Five Facets Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ), Adolescent Dissociative Experiences Scale (A-DES), Shorter Promis Questionnaire (SPQ). To mitigate the influence of background variables, a Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA) was conducted. Subsequently, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with latent variables was employed to assess the proposed mediation model. Finally, a Multiple-Group Path Analysis (MGPA) was conducted to assess the gender invariance of the hypothesized model. Gender and parental educational level were controlled for based on the findings of the MANCOVA. SEM yielded remarkable fit indices for the hypothesized model:  $\chi^2(72) = 209.92$ ;  $p < .001$ , CFI = .98, RMSEA = .04 (90% CI = .04 – .05), SRMR = .03. All direct and indirect pathways were statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ): from trait CEA to TM ( $\beta = -.35$ ), to DE ( $\beta = .52$ ), to PIU ( $\beta = .27$ ); from TM to PIU ( $\beta = -.17$ );

from DE to PIU ( $\beta = .37$ ); from trait CEA to PIU through TM ( $\beta = .06$ ), to PIU through DE ( $\beta = .19$ ). MPGA highlighted the gender invariance of the model:  $\Delta\chi^2(13) = 19.16$ ,  $p = .12$ ,  $\Delta CFI = .001$ . These findings emphasize the critical significance of recognizing and addressing the distinct and profound challenges confronted by adolescents who have endured CEA, especially those who exhibit heightened levels of dissociation and deficits in trait mindfulness. Such individuals may be at a heightened risk for engaging in maladaptive online behaviors. Consequently, the development and implementation of interventions tailored to target dissociation and enhance mindfulness skills could prove to be clinically effective in preventing and managing PIU among emotionally abused youth.

**Keywords:** *Childhood emotional abuse, trait mindfulness, dissociative experiences, problematic internet use, adolescents.*

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## DEMORALIZATION AFFECTS QUALITY OF LIFE IN TERMINAL CANCER PATIENTS IN PALLIATIVE CARE

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### Abstract

**Objective:** Demoralization implies a persistent inability to cope with a stressful situation and is characterized by feelings of hopelessness and helplessness due to loss of purpose and meaning in life. Although years of research have demonstrated its clinical importance, there are few studies that deepen the relationship between demoralization and health-related quality of life (HRQoL) in terminal cancer patients in palliative care. The aim of this study is to specifically examine the prevalence of demoralization in a sample of terminally ill cancer patients and assess its independent effect on patients' HRQoL, controlling for other clinical and psychological variables.

**Methods:** Data were collected from 372 terminal cancer patients undergoing palliative care. The Edmonton Symptom Assessment System (ESAS) for symptoms of palliative care patients, the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS) for psychological distress, the Functional Assessment of Cancer Therapy Scale - General Measure (FACT-G) for HRQoL and the Functional Assessment of Chronic Illness Therapy - Spiritual Well-Being for spirituality (FACIT-Sp) were used. In addition, Demoralization was assessed using the Demoralization Scale - Italian version (DS-IT).

**Results:** According to the DS-IT, 48.4% of the recruited terminal cancer patients were severely demoralized, and 13.7% showed moderate demoralization. Demoralization was strongly correlated with HRQoL, which was severely impaired (mean FACT-G (SD) = 53.52 (14.7)). The regression analysis showed that psychological distress (HADS:  $\beta = -0.42$ ,  $p < .001$ ), as well as "Disheartenment" ( $\beta = -0.21$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and "Sense of Failure" ( $\beta = -0.11$ ,  $p = .003$ ) subscales of the DS-IT were the strongest contributors for HRQoL, followed by the "Dysphoria" subscale ( $\beta = -0.07$ ,  $p = .034$ ) of the DS-IT and the "Appetite" ( $\beta = -0.09$ ,  $p = .012$ ), "Lack of Well-Being" ( $\beta = -0.08$ ,  $p = .032$ ), and "Drowsiness" ( $\beta = -0.07$ ,  $p = .035$ ) subscales of the ESAS, with the final model explaining 70% of the variance of the FACT-G.

**Conclusions:** The results of the present study highlight the presence of high levels of demoralization in terminal cancer patients and show that psychological distress and demoralization are the main independent negative factors affecting HRQoL in these patients. From a clinical perspective, the high prevalence and impact on HRQoL highlight the need to adequately assess demoralization and psychological distress in terminal cancer patients and to identify psychological interventions that focus on preventing existential distress and thus improve the quality of life of dying patients and accompany them until the end of life.

**Keywords:** *Psycho-oncology, Demoralization, end-of-life, palliative care, quality of life.*

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## **PARENT TRAINING BASED ON PARENTAL REFLECTIVE FUNCTION ON THE WELL-BEING OF THE FAMILY IN ASD**

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### **Abstract**

Parents play a crucial role in the development of their children. Literature emphasizes the significance of parent training in the treatment of all neurodevelopmental disorders, but it is particularly crucial in the treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorder. In the last years took place a lot of treatment for Autism that involve directly the parents to work with their children. These studies have shown a high level of integrity in delivering strategies for managing problem behaviors by parents and supporting the development of their child's abilities. Working with parents has shown better levels of generalization, improvement in adaptive skills, and greater satisfaction with the results obtained by the child. Several studies also suggest that parent training reduces stress within the family. Different approaches used have been found to be effective. We want to investigate the effects of different types of parent training on the well-being of families and on the adaptive skills of the children. We divided a sample of 200 couple of parents into three groups. One group follows a parent training program based on applied behavior analysis, another group follows a parent training program based on behavioral strategies and the support of parental reflex functioning. The third group does not participate in parent training. We used the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) to assess the level of problem behavior in children, the Parenting Stress Index (PSI) to measure the stress index of parents, and the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale to assess children's daily life skills. Our results confirm that parent training, regardless of the approach used, can decrease problem behaviour and improve the adaptive behavior of children and the well-being of parents by reducing stress levels. However, parent training programs that focus on supporting the educational role of parents and their emotional well-being result in a greater reduction in family stress levels and, simultaneously, an decrease in problem behavior.

**Keywords:** *Parent training, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Parental Stress Index.*

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## **PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS FOR MESOTHELIOMA PATIENTS AND THEIR CAREGIVERS**

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**Alessandra De Luca, & Antonella Granieri**

*Department of Psychology, University of Turin (Italy)*

### **Abstract**

**Objective:** Malignant Mesothelioma (MM) has a striking impact on the somatopsychic balance of patients and their families, including physical, psychological, and interpersonal problems. The aim of this systematic literature review was to investigate what psychological interventions are offered to patients with MM and their caregivers worldwide. **Methods:** The review was conducted using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses. The literature search led to the identification of 12 articles. Results were categorized into five categories. 1. Individual psychological support, 2. Group psychological support, 3. Cognitive-behavioral group psychotherapy, 4. Brief psychoanalytic groups, 5. Multifamily group. **Results:** The interventions differed in terms of form, duration and resources used. Most of them were group-based and psychoanalytically oriented, although individual and cognitive-behavioral interventions were also described. Despite the differences, the interventions appeared to be fundamental in facilitating the processing of mental pain and anger related to the diagnosis. **Conclusion:** Our study has shown that there are still few psychological interventions available for MM patients and their caregivers. The somatopsychic consequences of MM in patients and caregivers should encourage institutions and healthcare professionals to develop assessment and intervention models that address the different dimensions of their suffering and promote their residual vitality.

**Keywords:** *Malignant mesothelioma, cancer, caregivers, psychotherapy, interventions.*

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## **POST-TRAUMATIC GROWTH EFFECTS IN SEVERE COVID-19 SURVIVORS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY**

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### **Abstract**

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to concerning mortality rates worldwide and long-term health risks for the survivors. COVID-19 patients have endured physical and psychological stress during infection, hospitalization, and recovery. Recent research indicates that some discharged patients exhibit Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG) demonstrating the possibility to flourish despite adversity. Although studies have explored psychiatric outcomes among COVID-19 survivors, few have examined PTG specifically. This research aims to explore former patients' experiences within the post-acute period, in terms of positive long-term post-COVID effects and the role of coping resources in the recovery period. Semi-structured interviews were conducted from November 2022 to April 2023, involving 21 participants (57% female), mean age 64, residing in Romania. All participants were hospitalized for severe COVID-19, from 5 to 32 days. Thematic analysis identified four major themes: (1) Coping strategies - including reframing the experience positively, break the recovery path into manageable actions, self-care, support seeking, and acceptance; (2) Inner Strengths - optimism, actively living life, determination, independence, and experience with hardship helped many participants endure this difficult illness; (3) Changed Life Perspective - including increased compassion, helping others more, and valuing close relationships; (4) Gratitude - the awareness of personal wellbeing's value prompted gratitude and hope for many survivors. Some participants described making concerted efforts to appreciate each new day, others increased prosocial and altruistic behaviors, while others conveyed gratitude to God following the trauma of COVID-19. The findings underscore the factors that contributed to participants' PTG and provide unique insights into the pathways to thriving utilized by former COVID-19 patients. This research contributes to a better understanding of multifaceted post-acute experiences of hospitalized survivors, highlighting avenues through which medical adversity catalyzed enduring positive changes across cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and relational domains.

**Keywords:** *Post-Traumatic Growth, COVID-19 survivors, positive changes, hospitalization, pandemic.*

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## **DYNAMICS OF AUTISM SYMPTOMS IN 3-6-YEAR-OLDS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF A 4-FACTOR MODEL**

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### **Abstract**

In 2020 – 2022 we conducted a survey of 926 children (383 with ASD, 200 with DD, 343 Norm group) in order to elaborate a screening scale for the expert diagnosis of ASD in 3-4-year-olds. For the examination we used an online questionnaire developed by us to identify 436 possible symptoms of autism. The questions were answered by specialists involved in correctional work with children. The main result of the study was elaboration of Autism Scale based on 40 autism symptoms (points) representing 4 vectors of its manifestation: 1) difficulties in establishing emotional contact, expressing one's emotions and decoding the emotions of others in the context of social interaction; 2) sensory disintegration; 3) difficulties in verbal and non-verbal communication and social skills; 4) hyperactivity, including excessive movements, motor disinhibition and restless behavior. The Scale has a prediction accuracy of 88.91% (sensitivity 92.1%, specificity 87.2%) (Nasledov, Miroshnikov, Tkacheva, Miroshnik, & Semeta, 2021). The structural and measurement invariance of this model was confirmed for boys and girls, 3- and 4-year-olds (Nasledov et al., 2021). In 2023 233 5-6-year-olds with ASD were examined using an online questionnaire including 40 points of the mentioned above Scale, in order to study the suitability of the developed Scale for diagnosing children of this age and identification of possible age-related changes. A multigroup confirmatory factor analysis showed that the Autism Scale, the 4-factor version of which was developed for 3-4-year-old children, retained structural and measurement equivalence for 5-6-year-olds. The accuracy of differentiation of the group of children with ASD from other children for this age remained high (85.8%), only slightly lower than for 3-4-year-olds. Apparently, this is due to the fact that

the identified 4 factors (vectors) of ASD symptoms are the areas in which children with ASD differ the most from other children, and are least susceptible to age-related changes. Further, the values of the factors were calculated for children as the average values of the points included in each factor. A multidimensional ANOVA was used to study age shifts: Gender factor (1st, 2nd), Age factor (1 – 3-4-year-olds, 2 – 5-6-year-olds), dependent variables – 4 calculated factors. Multidimensional criteria revealed statistically significant main effects of the factors Gender and Age, the effect of the interaction of these factors was not statistically significant. According to one-dimensional criteria, girls, regardless of age, have statistically significantly stronger symptoms of Communication disorders than boys. Regardless of gender, the influence of age according to one-dimensional criteria was revealed in relation to Communication disorders and Sensory disorders. These symptoms decrease with age, apparently under the influence of corrective interventions. Regarding Emotional disorders and Hyperactivity/Disinhibition age differences are far from statistically significant. These symptoms remain at a consistently high level with age, apparently as more resistant to corrective interventions.

**Keywords:** ASD, 3-6-year-olds, factor structure of autism, autism vectors.

## UNRAVELING THE COMPLEX INTERPLAY OF AFFECTIVE NEUROPERSONALITY AND EMPATHY

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### Abstract

Individual discrepancies in expressing, regulating, and interpreting emotions not only explain a substantial portion of personality variability but also underlie diverse psychogenic expressions. Emotions and their regulatory processes serve as the very foundation of human personality. Building on neurobiological and evolutionary findings, Panksepp et al. (2011) explored the brain systems at the core of human emotions, leading to the development of the Affective Neuroscience Personality Scales (ANPS), which assess seven primary emotional systems underlying human emotional processes in a contemporary and interdisciplinary approach. This study aims to investigate the relationship between primary emotional systems and cognitive and emotional empathy processes. A total of 818 participants, consisting of 506 females and 312 males aged between 18-45 ( $M = 26.36$ ,  $SD = 7.36$ ), voluntarily participated in the study, declaring no psychiatric/neurological diagnoses. Data collection instruments included a sociodemographic information form, the Turkish versions of the Questionnaire of Cognitive and Affective Empathy (QCAE), and the Affective Neuroscience Personality Scale (ANPS). Data were collected online through SurveyMonkey, and the analysis was conducted using SPSS 26.0. To investigate the connections between QCAE and ANPS subscale scores, we utilized multiple linear regression models with a stepwise variable selection procedure. The results indicate that affective empathy is predicted by FEAR ( $\beta = .274$ ,  $t(812) = 8.778$ ,  $p < .001$ ), CARE ( $\beta = .215$ ,  $t(812) = 6.825$ ,  $p < .001$ ), SPIRITUALITY ( $\beta = .153$ ,  $t(812) = 4.856$ ,  $p < .001$ ), PLAY ( $\beta = .120$ ,  $t(812) = 4.037$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and SADNESS ( $\beta = .120$ ,  $t(812) = 3.390$ ,  $p < .01$ ) ( $R^2 = .346$ ,  $F(5,812) = 85.804$ ,  $p < .001$ ), while cognitive empathy is predicted by SEEK ( $\beta = .429$ ,  $t(814) = 7.675$ ,  $p < .001$ ), CARE ( $\beta = .269$ ,  $t(814) = 5.511$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and SPIRITUALITY ( $\beta = .151$ ,  $t(814) = 2.960$ ,  $p < .001$ ) ( $R^2 = .177$ ,  $F(3,814) = 58.486$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Our results indicate that ANPS subscales positively predict both affective and cognitive empathy, signifying the influence of primary emotional systems on higher-order empathic abilities. Furthermore, these results aligns with the broader discourse on the dynamic interaction between emotional and cognitive processes, further enriching our comprehension of human behavior and its underlying neurobiological correlates.

**Keywords:** Affective Neuroscience Theory (ANT), affective neuropersonality, cognitive empathy, affective empathy, MLR.

## ATTITUDE TOWARDS MENTAL ILLNESS AND ITS EFFECT ON SEEKING PSYCHOLOGICAL TREATMENT AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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### Abstract

Mental illness among university students is an ever-growing concern. The many challenges arising from both academic and social life are factors that likely contribute to mental illness in this population. Indeed, the often-hectic university lifestyle can lead to stress, depression, and anxiety for some students. This might accumulate with other stressors (e.g., interpersonal conflict, family relationships, and socio-environmental factors) thereby affecting a student's capability to cope when experiencing difficulties. Without adequate psychological support, certain students may develop mental illnesses. Although most universities offer various means to access psychological assistance or counselling, many students nonetheless feel hesitant to seek help. A major barrier in help-seeking is the perceived negative attitude towards mental health issues, including feeling ashamed for being diagnosed with a mental illness and worrying about the potential consequences of such a diagnosis. Thus, negative attitudes can impede students from seeking psychological support. To investigate this phenomenon, a study involving 236 university students was conducted. It found that negative attitudes towards mental illness play a significant role in students not seeking psychological help. Students exhibiting positive attitudes towards mental illness demonstrated fewer barriers to obtaining psychological help (i.e., less fear of stigmatization, less difficulty in self-disclosure, and less perceived devaluation). Positive attitudes towards mental illness might derive from greater knowledge and awareness about mental health. Therefore, it is imperative for universities and similar institutions to implement mental health advocacy programs to promote positive attitudes towards mental illness. This may decrease certain barriers among university students considering obtaining psychological help.

**Keywords:** *Attitude, mental illness, psychological help, barriers.*

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## SENSORY PROFILE AND ADAPTATION IN ADULTS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER WITHOUT COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT

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### Abstract

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a disorder included into neurodevelopmental disorders. ASD is characterized by social and communication issues, restricted and repetitive patterns of behavior or interests, and alterations in sensory perception. These impairments significantly impact people's lives, leading to a decrease in their quality of adaptation. Autism Spectrum Disorder can manifest either in comorbidity with other neurodevelopmental disorders or in isolation. Due to increased sensitivity and awareness, many individuals seek a diagnosis in adulthood. Many of them seek a diagnosis because one or more relatives have received an Autism diagnosis. Some individuals learn about the disorder through friends or social channels, while others receive a diagnosis after developing secondary symptoms such as depression or anxiety disorders. Literature shows that not all individuals with autism traits experience impairments in their lives; they are often referred to as having a 'broader phenotype.' However, some individuals experience difficulties in school and work even in the absence of disabilities, while others exhibit challenges in adapting to various aspects of life. In our study, we aim to investigate whether sensory alterations have a negative impact on adaptive functioning in adults with autism who received their diagnosis in adulthood. Specifically, the goal of our study is to examine the correlation between the sensory profile, adaptive quotient, and the development of depression and anxiety disorders. We used the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale, 4th edition, to assess cognitive impairment and the Ritvo Autism Asperger Diagnostic Scale–Revised (RAADS–R) for diagnosing autism in adulthood. A total of 25 subjects met our criteria. To assess sensory processing dysfunction, we utilized the Glasgow Sensory Questionnaire (GSQ). For investigating the adaptive quotient, we administered the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale II. Depression is assessed using the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), while anxiety traits or disorders are measured with the Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale" (HAM-A). Correlation between

sensory profile and depression/anxiety levels measured. Our results show that a significant change in sensory processing correlates with prominent symptoms of anxiety and depression. In addition, changes in sensory processing are also correlated with low adaptive functioning in the daily and social domains.

**Keywords:** *Autism Spectrum Disorder, sensory impairment, adaptive quotient, Autism in adulthood, adults.*

## **GENERATIONAL CONTINUITY: A STUDY ON EARLY MALADAPTIVE SCHEMAS PASSED FROM MOTHERS TO ADULT CHILDREN**

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to investigate the potential similarity between the early maladaptive schemas of mothers and their adult children and explore whether such similarity varies based on defense mechanisms and personality traits. To achieve these objectives, defense mechanisms (Mature Defense, Neurotic Defense, Immature Defense) and personality traits (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability or neuroticism, and openness to experience) were examined, with each sub-dimension categorized into three levels: low, moderate, and high. A total of 318 participants, comprising 159 mothers ( $M = 48,58$ ,  $SD = 5,74$ ) and 159 children ( $M = 22,67$ ,  $SD = 3,92$ ) voluntarily participated in the study. Participants completed the Young Schema Questionnaire, Short Form 3 (YSQ-SF3), The Big Five-50 Personality Questionnaire (B5KT-50-Tr), Defense Style Questionnaire (DSQ-40), and a Demographic Data Form. Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS 26. The Dependent Sample t-Test, considering the normal distribution of the difference series, was employed to assess the similarity between the schema scores of mothers and adult children. The results reveal a significant similarity in the domains of early maladaptive schemas between mothers and adult children ( $p < 0.05$ ). Additionally, certain schema domains showed differences in response to adult children's low level mature defense, moderate-level mature defense, moderate-level neurotic defense, high-level neurotic defense, moderate-level immature defense, high-level immature defense ( $p < .05$ ). Regarding personality traits, statistical differences were identified in various schema domains for extraversion, emotional stability, and openness to experience at each level. Notably, moderate agreeableness trait was associated with impaired boundaries and other-directedness; low conscientiousness trait with impaired autonomy and hypervigilance; and moderate conscientiousness trait with impaired boundaries and hypervigilance, all exhibiting statistical differences in schema domains ( $p < .05$ ).

**Keywords:** *Early maladaptive schema, defense mechanisms, five factor personality, schema transmission.*

## **SELF-HANDICAPPING IN ADULTS: RELATIONSHIP WITH PERFECTIONISM, SELF-CRITICAL RUMINATION AND METACOGNITIVE BELIEFS**

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### **Abstract**

Self-handicapping refers to an individual creating verbal or behavioral obstacles to their own performance, adversely impacting psychological well-being and potentially leading to maladaptive behaviors such as procrastination and substance abuse. Previous studies have highlighted that perfectionists, individuals prone to self-critical rumination, and those with negative metacognitions employ diverse strategies to avoid failure and negative self-evaluation. This study aims to investigate the influence of perfectionism, self-critical rumination, and metacognitions (including positive beliefs, uncontrollability and danger, cognitive confidence, the need to control thoughts, and cognitive self-consciousness) on self-handicapping in adults, as well as explore the interrelationships among these variables. A total of 351 participants, aged 18-65 ( $M = 29.39$ ,  $SD = 9.18$ ), voluntarily participated in the study. Data collection instruments included a socio-demographic information form, Self-Handicapping

Scale (SHS), Almost Perfect Scale-Revised (APS-R), Self-Critical Rumination Scale (SCRS), and Metacognitions Questionnaire-30 (MCQ-30). Data were collected online employing Multiple Linear Regression models to identify predictors of the self-handicapping. The results revealed that self-handicapping scores were positively predicted by self-critical rumination subscale, maladaptive perfectionism subscale of APS-R, and uncontrollability and danger beliefs subscale of MCQ-30, while they were negatively predicted by adaptive perfectionism subscale of APS-R. The findings suggest that self-handicapping tendencies are influenced positively by self-critical rumination, maladaptive perfectionism, and beliefs related to uncontrollability and danger. Conversely, adaptive perfectionism has a negative predictive effect on self-handicapping. Given these findings, intervention strategies aimed at reducing self-handicapping behaviors should acknowledge the multifaceted nature of perfectionism, considering its maladaptive elements alongside the potential protective factors residing within its adaptive aspects. Furthermore, the significant role of metacognitive beliefs concerning uncontrollability and danger in self-handicapping has been observed.

**Keywords:** *Perfectionism, self-critical rumination, metacognitions, self-handicapping, MLR.*

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## **MMPI-A TEMPORAL STABILITY STUDY IN TWO SAMPLES OF PORTUGUESE ADOLESCENTS, WITH AND WITHOUT CLINICAL COMPLAINTS**

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### **Abstract**

The present research is a temporal stability study of the Portuguese version of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory for Adolescents (MMPI-A; Silva et al., 2006). This personality and psychopathology inventory, the Portuguese adaptation of the original version (MMPI-A; Butcher et al., 1992), was approved by the University of Minnesota Press. This work analysed the temporal stability of the personality and psychopathology measures provided by the MMPI-A, namely the Validity, Clinical, Content and Supplementary scales stability, in two samples contrasted by the participants' clinical condition. The study followed a repeated measures design, with a 7-day average interval between administrations. The overall sample included 146 participants aged between 14 and 18 years ( $M = 17.09$ ;  $SD = 1.33$ ) organized in two samples: a) Non-clinical Complaints sample ( $N = 62$ ), including 11 males and 51 females; b) Clinical Complaints sample ( $N = 84$ ), including 11 males and 73 females. The MMPI-A was administered in small groups and individual sessions, after informed consent by the participants, or their legal representatives, when under 18. Descriptive statistics ( $M$  and  $SD$ ), Pearson correlation coefficients ( $r_{tt}$ ), and paired-samples t-tests were used on five Validity scales, ten basic Clinical scales, fifteen Content scales, and six Supplementary scales. The temporal stability indices ( $r_{tt}$ ) revealed highly significant values ( $p < .001$ ), for all scales, in both samples. In the Non-clinical sample, the  $r_{tt}$  coefficients for the Validity scales varied between .83 and .90, for the Clinical scales, between .75 and .95, for the Content scales, between .75 and .93, and for the Supplementary scales, between .77 and .89. As for the Clinical sample,  $r_{tt}$  indices for the Validity scales varied between .75 and .91, for the Clinical scales between .70 and .92, for the Content scales, between .69 and 91, and for the Supplementary scales, between .75 and .88. Despite the high temporal stability indices, statistically significant differences were found between administrations, in a few scales. As should be expected, the MMPI-A Portuguese version's measures revealed good to very good temporal stability, within a one-week interval between assessments, both in non-clinical and clinical samples of Portuguese adolescents.

**Keywords:** *MMPI-A, temporal stability, test-retest, adolescent clinical sample, adolescent non-clinical sample.*

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## EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

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### EXPLORING WHAT LEARNING STYLES GENERATION Z STUDENTS PREFER: A CASE OF INDONESIAN UNDERGRADUATES

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#### Abstract

This study aimed to empirically examine the preferred learning styles of undergraduate students of Generation Z based on Kolb's learning theory. The literature has highlighted unique learning characteristics of Generation Z, but empirical investigations have been inconclusive in terms of Generation Z's learning style, particularly in relation to Kolb's learning model. We applied Kolb's Learning Style Inventory, examining 423 undergraduate elementary education students in an Indonesian university. All of the participants were in Generation Z, ranging from 18 to 23 years old in 2023. Results revealed that as a whole, students preferred the learning mode of abstract conceptualization (i.e., thinking) over concrete experience (i.e., feeling), as well as preferred the mode of reflective observation (i.e., reflecting) over active experimentation (i.e., acting). Furthermore, the most common learning style was Diverging (63%); the second, Assimilating (28%); the third, Converging (5%); and finally, the fourth, Accommodating (4%). Based on these results, we discuss implications and limitations.

**Keywords:** Learning style, Generation Z, Kolb's learning theory, Indonesian university, teacher education.

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### SLOVAK ADOLESCENTS' SELF-CONCEPT AS A PREDICTOR OF THEIR SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

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#### Abstract

A student's school engagement is a significant factor in his/her school success (Appleton et al., 2006; Simons-Morton & Chen, 2009; Wang, 2009). Student self-concept is also associated with school performance according to previous research (e.g., Marsh & Martin, 2011). The present study builds on the results of the investigation of the correlations between the overall self-concept of Slovak adolescents and their school engagement. However, its aim is to confirm the individual dimensions of adolescents' self-concept in the Piers-Harris sense in the role of predictors of their overall school engagement. Thus, the ambition of the research study is to contribute to the explanation of the construct of school engagement. The research sample consists of 1013 adolescents (M<sub>Age</sub> = 17.00, SD<sub>Age</sub> = 1.27) from different regions of the Slovak Republic. ASCSS/Adolescents' Self-Concept Short Scale (Veiga & Leite, 2016) and SES-4DS/Student Engagement in Schools - Four-dimensional Scale (Veiga, 2016) were used as research instruments. Multiple regression analysis deepened the results of the correlational analysis and a statistically significant regression model explained approximately 45% of the adolescent school engagement variable. In the role of significant predictors in relation to school engagement, the model confirms three of the six dimensions of adolescents' self-concept in the Piers-Harris sense: behaviour, popularity, and intellectual status. The discussion focuses on finding parallels with the dimensions of the construct of school engagement (behavioural, affective and cognitive). The results of the research study (despite its limits: self-reports, data collection) can be used in setting up intervention programs oriented towards strengthening students' school engagement and secondarily improving their academic performance.

**Keywords:** Adolescence, school engagement, self-concept.

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## ACHIEVEMENT GOAL MOTIVATION AND RELIANCE ON CHATGPT FOR LEARNING

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### **Abstract**

With the advancement of artificial intelligence and its integration into education, understanding individual differences in interaction with this technology becomes a pressing issue. This study examined the association between achievement goal orientations and reliance on an artificial intelligence tool, ChatGPT, among higher education students. Crowdsourced participants (N= 413) filled in a questionnaire measuring attitudes towards ChatGPT, reliance on ChatGPT for completing 13 tasks, and achievement goal orientations. Mastery approach orientation was, in general, associated with lower reliance on ChatGPT, while mastery avoidance and performance approach with higher, albeit these associations did not hold for all of the examined tasks. The findings underscore the need for further longitudinal and individual-difference-based research on use of and reliance on educational technology.

**Keywords:** *ChatGPT, learning, achievement goal motivation, university students.*

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## TEACHER PRACTICE SUPPORTING STUDENT SCHOOL READINESS SKILLS: A QUALITATIVE LONGITUDINAL STUDY RELATED TO COVID-19 FROM MID-2020 TO MID-2023

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### **Abstract**

Studies focusing on pedagogical and curricular practices of teachers during children's formative years during and following the COVID-19 pandemic are scarce. Framed by school readiness and social development theories, a qualitative 4-year longitudinal study was conducted in a metropolitan region of the western United States. A total of 10 teachers completed three semi-structured open-ended interview sessions with one researcher. The purpose of this study was to explore how teachers supported their students in developing school readiness skills during and following the outbreak of COVID-19. Sixteen teachers volunteered for the first phase of the study in 2020; 13 of the 16 teachers were participants in the second phase during 2021-2022; and 10 out of 16 teachers were participants during the third phase of the study in 2023. Criteria for recruiting volunteer participants included the following: (1) currently teaching preschool (PS)/prekindergarten (PK)/kindergarten (K) when interviews were conducted, (2) having a minimum of 3 years' experience teaching at the PS/PK/P levels during phase one, and (3) teaching in an accredited private, public, or charter school in a metropolitan area of the western United States during the 4-year span. Data were collected via one-on-one semi-structured audio-taped interviews, each lasting between 45 and 130 minutes. Data were analyzed by following an inductive process based on Saldaña's coding system. A priori codes were taken from the conceptual framework and relevant literature, which were updated during each phase of the data analysis as questions were checked for reliability and validity. Structural, descriptive, and axial coding were used to reveal patterns and categories with emerging themes. The member-checking process was followed with each participant following all phases. Findings from the longitudinal study revealed five themes that teachers (1) modified their pedagogical practices and implemented new curricula to meet their students' needs; (2) were faced with continuous challenges that arose in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, isolation, and reestablishment periods; (3) expanded roles as they advocated and collaborated with mental health and behavioral experts for student interventions; (4) created communities of practice for peer mentoring/coaching support resulting in expansion of their repertoire in pedagogy/curriculum; (5) strengthened relationships with other teachers and students' parents while engaging in parent education and co-teaching strategies. Recommendations include further research on communities of practice and collaborative practices between teachers and mental health professionals that benefit students and families.

**Keywords:** *School readiness, COVID-19, developmental domains, co-teaching, mentoring.*

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## EXAMINING THE EDUCATIONAL EFFECTS OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING USING A GIANT MAZE IN VIRTUAL REALITY

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### Abstract

In this study, I compared VR/HMD and VR/desktop conditions in a cooperative learning situation using a giant maze and examined the differences in educational effects. The participants were 24 female university students. Participants formed pairs and attempted to reach the goal by attempting to complete a giant maze in the VR collaborative learning material "ayalab Shall we walk?" Group cohesion, interpersonal reactivity (perspective-taking, fantasy, empathic concerns, and personal pain), and critical thinking attitude (awareness of logical thinking, inquisitiveness, objectivity, and emphasis on evidence) before and after cooperative learning in this maze were measured using Microsoft Forms. For these scales, I conducted an analysis of variance on three factors: survey timing (pre-test, post-test), conditions (VR/HMD, VR/desktop), and task achievement level (completed, incomplete). Results showed that group cohesion was high in the post-test. Perspective-taking increased in the VR/desktop/task-completed group, VR/desktop/task-incompleted group, and VR/HMD/task-incompleted group but did not change in the VR/HMD/task-completed group. The empathic concerns score was higher for the task-completed groups in the VR/desktop and VR/HMD conditions. The awareness of logical thinking score was higher in the task-completed group than in the task-incompleted group. The objectivity score decreased in the VR/desktop group and increased in the VR/HMD group.

**Keywords:** *Virtual reality cooperative learning, giant maze, VR/HMD, VR/desktop, educational effect.*

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## THE LANGUAGE PRACTICES OF PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS IN RAISING MALAY-ENGLISH BILINGUALS – A CONCEPTUAL PAPER

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### Abstract

Parents and caregivers play an important role in their child's language development. Ideally, all Malaysians should be Malay-English bilinguals, as it is stated in the National Language Act that Malay is the National Language and English is the Official Second Language of the nation. However, in reality, not all Malaysians are Simultaneous or Sequential Early Malay-English bilinguals. Studies have shown that the language practices of parents and caregivers are an essential aspect in developing children as bilinguals. Raising children as Malay-English bilinguals can be challenging due to the inadequate input and exposure to both languages that the children may receive. Therefore, this study is aimed at exploring the language practices among parents and caregivers in raising their young child into Malay-English bilinguals. To achieve this aim, a community-based online survey will be distributed to parents and caregivers of 1- to 6-year-old Malay-English bilingual child throughout Malaysia. The survey consists of a set of parental report questions comprising four constructs based on Bandura's social learning theory, Skinner's theory of learning, Vygotsky's social development theory, and Krashen's comprehensible input theory. These four constructs employed are to identify the language practices of parents and/or caregivers to the children's language development via behavioral social learning, behavioral reinforcement and responses, cognitive development and language learning ability through scaffolding and social interaction, and language acquisition and language comprehension based on  $i + 1$  and comprehensible input. The implications of this future research may provide information on the right language practices that parents and caregivers may employ to raise their children as Simultaneous or Sequential Early Malay-English Bilinguals. In short, this study will hopefully materialize the Malaysian government's policy to strengthen the Malay language as the National Language and uphold the English language as the Official Second Language to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG-16).

**Keywords:** *Language exposure, parental language strategies, child language development, Malay-English bilinguals, bilingualism.*

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## EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND SOCIAL MEDIA USE: DISSOCIATIVE EXPERIENCES AND FEAR OF MISSING OUT AS MEDIATORS

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### Abstract

The increasing prevalence of social media usage has sparked a growing interest in understanding the factors contributing to problematic social media use (PSMU). This study explores this phenomenon through the lens of the Interaction Person-Affect-Cognition-Execution (I-PACE) model. Specifically, it investigates whether the fear of missing out (FoMO) and dissociative experiences (DE) serve as sequential mediators in the relationship between trait emotional intelligence (trait EI) and PSMU, and whether the proposed model remains consistent across genders. The study involved 1216 adolescents in Italy (comprising 608 girls) aged between 14 and 17 years ( $M = 15.43$ ,  $SD = 0.86$ ). Participants completed several self-report assessments: the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire – Adolescent Short Form (TEIQue-ASF), Fear of Missing Out Scale (FoMOs), Adolescent Dissociative Experiences Scale (A-DES), and Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS). A Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA) was conducted to account for the influence of background variables. Subsequently, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with latent variables was employed to evaluate the mediation model. Finally, a Multiple-Group Path Analysis (MGPA) was conducted to assess the invariance of the mediation pattern across genders. Gender and parental educational level were controlled for in the main analyses based on MANCOVA's findings. SEM revealed exceptional fit indices for the hypothesized model:  $\chi^2(72) = 220.11$ ;  $p < .001$ , CFI = 0.99, RMSEA = 0.04 (90% CI = 0.04 – 0.05), SRMR = 0.02. All direct and indirect paths were statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ): from trait EI to FoMO ( $\beta = -.67$ ), to DE ( $\beta = -.22$ ), to PSMU ( $\beta = -.24$ ); from FoMO to DE ( $\beta = .43$ ), to PSMU ( $\beta = .43$ ); from DE to PSMU ( $\beta = .19$ ); from trait EI to DE through FoMO ( $\beta = -.29$ ), to PSMU through FoMO ( $\beta = -.29$ ); from trait EI to PSMU through DE ( $\beta = -.04$ ); from FoMO to PSMU through DE ( $\beta = .08$ ). MGPA highlighted the gender invariance of the model:  $\Delta\chi^2(14) = 22.17$ ,  $p = 0.08$ ,  $\Delta CFI = 0.001$ . The results of our study support the I-PACE framework, suggesting that trait EI may play a preventive role in mitigating PSMU by reducing the likelihood of experiencing FoMO and DE. Therefore, interventions aimed at enhancing emotional intelligence could be effective in minimizing the adverse consequences associated with PSMU. Additionally, addressing issues related to FoMO and DE and promoting the adoption of adaptive coping strategies may be valuable in fostering healthier patterns of social media usage.

**Keywords:** Trait emotional intelligence, dissociative experiences, fear of missing out, problematic social media use, adolescence.

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## THE IMPACT OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGIES IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH NEURODEVELOPMENTAL DISORDERS: A NATIONAL PILOT STUDY

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### Abstract

The fostering of efforts to improve the inclusion of individuals with Neurodevelopmental Disorders (ND) has led to the widespread adoption of Assistive Technology (AT) at specialised centres and schools. Research findings indicate that utilizing AT can be beneficial for individuals with various ND, as it promotes the development of their psychological, communication and social abilities. This paper examines the perceptions and preferences of professionals regarding the impact of AT on educational and psychosocial outcomes for students with different disorders. In this study, a Delphi-based survey was carried out among a panel of 23 experts. They come from various occupational domains - speech and language centres, disability organisations, psychological centres and academia. We constructed a questionnaire, consisting of 26 statements and investigating different aspects of AT – education, society, service provision and employment. After two rounds of questionnaire surveying, the top two statements

in each category were ranked by the professionals. In this way 10 questions were reserved and completed online. The statistical results of the survey show that there is a lot of consensus among Bulgarian experts on the Delphi statements. As a whole the experts are rather optimistic about the use of AT for individuals with developmental disabilities. Almost all of the stakeholders have intermediate or advanced level of expertise with respect to assistive technology. According to them the biggest challenges for the indicated statements in the survey to become reality are economic and political ones. Considering the results obtained in the study, integrating AT would provide more accessible educational environment for individuals with disorders and would facilitate specialists who work with them. The results of this study could offer valuable insights for the formulation of policies aimed at fostering greater inclusivity for individuals with disorders within educational environments, highlighting the need to expand the sample in future studies.

**Keywords:** *Assistive Technologies, educational settings, Neurodevelopmental Disorders, professional perceptions, Delphi survey.*

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## **MENTALIZATION, SOFT SKILLS AND LEARNING**

**Alessandro Froli, Francesco Cerciello, Clara Esposito, Rossana Pia Laccone, & Fabio Bisogni**

*Department of International Humanities and Social Science,  
Rome University of International Studies (Italy)*

### **Abstract**

Mentalization is the ability to infer other mental states, desires and intentions. It could be implicit, explicit or it may refer to self and others or it may be cognitive or affective. It underpins the complexity and the creation of social interactions. It is now understood that mentalizing is not a singular process; rather, it encompasses a range of specific and nonspecific sub-processes, known and unknown, including emotions, reasoning, understanding causality, and distinguishing between self and others. Social skills such as communication and cognition become part of the umbrella term "soft skills" when it comes to negotiation skills and the ability to interact positively with each other. The term "soft skills" refers to qualities and competencies that individuals can use transversally in different contexts, e.g., adaptability, flexibility, responsibility, integrity and efficiency. Furthermore, the labour market acknowledges and rewards these skills owing to their capacity to confer flexibility and adaptability, thereby embodying the competing attributes of the future workforce. Communication skills entail discourse, dialogue, and strategic communication aspects, which serve the individual to communicate successfully and according to the individual situation and context in view of empathy for her/his own and others' needs. It comprises presentation skills, negotiation skills, client communication, and active listening. Moreover, people better equipped with emotional intelligence can form meaningful relationships and become better listeners, leaders, and decision-makers. The study is aimed to show if a specific educational intervention through activities based on mentalization skills and soft skills could increase academic career (specifically we consider Math, Physics, Literature and Philosophy in terms of academic average). The educational intervention was based on frontal lessons and laboratory activities in which pupils learnt about mentalization processes and they had the opportunity to stimulate their ability to infer other mental states. We recruited 160 participants aged between 15 and 16 from 4 different high schools. The results show that a specific educational intervention based on soft skills and activities based on the reasoning of themselves and other's perspective may improve academic career in terms of an academic average increased. In addition, there was a difference between humanistic and scientific subjects. In conclusion, our study proposes how the enhancement of mentalization skills and associated soft skills can improve academic performance in schools.

**Keywords:** *Mentalization, soft skills, learning, intervention, education.*

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## DESCRIPTIVE NORMATIVE BELIEFS AMONG YOUNG ADOLESCENTS. A SOLOMON FOUR GROUP DESIGN

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### Abstract

The EU school-based universal drug use prevention program Unplugged is based on education regarding drugs and drug use, normative beliefs and improving life skills. It consists of 12 lessons and is primarily designed for 12-14-year-old adolescents. The aim of this study was to explore the effects of Unplugged and gender over time on adolescents' descriptive normative beliefs about smoking (DNB<sup>S</sup>) and alcohol consumption (DNB<sup>AC</sup>). Method: A cluster randomized control trial using a Solomon four-group design, which enabled testing for the presence of pre-test sensitization, was carried out. The data collection was carried out immediately before implementing the program (T1, experimental and control group with a pre-test), immediately after implementing the program (T2) and one year after implementation (T3). Twelve schools were assigned to the experimental group (EG, n = 798) and twelve schools were assigned to the control group (CG, n = 622). The sample consisted of 1424 adolescents in total (the mean age = 13.5 years, SD = 0.59; 47.5% girls). In this design, both EG and CG had two subgroups: a pretested group<sup>PT</sup> and a non-pretested<sup>nPT</sup> group (n/EG<sup>PT</sup> = 397, n/EG<sup>nPT</sup> = 401, n/CG<sup>PT</sup> = 333, n/CG<sup>nPT</sup> = 289). In order to increase the effect of Unplugged, booster-sessions called nPrevention were carried out (EG+) after T2. The aim of nPrevention was to strengthen the preventive effect of Unplugged. Outcome variables were examined with GLM repeated measures analyses. DNB<sup>S</sup> and DNB<sup>AC</sup> increased over time (from T1 to T2 and from T2 to T3). There was a significant interaction effect between DNB<sup>AC</sup> x Group (CG, EG, EG+ all without pretesting). DNB<sup>AC</sup> increased from T2 to T3 among adolescents of all groups, but this increase was more pronounced only for adolescents of CG and EG. Next, the interaction DNB<sup>AC</sup> x Group (CG, EG, EG+, all without pretesting) x Gender was significant. DNB<sup>AC</sup> increased from T2 to T3 in boys in all groups, but only in girls from CG and EG. The decline of DNB<sup>AC</sup> in girls of EG+ was found from T2 to T3. An increase in DNB<sup>S</sup> and DNB<sup>AC</sup> was found over time. The implementation of Unplugged with booster sessions and without pretesting could be an important factor for prevention of alcohol consumption. One of the possible interpretations is that it supports intrinsic motivation, which can be assumed especially for girls who participated of the prevention program.

**Keywords:** *Descriptive normative beliefs, young adolescents, alcohol consumption, smoking, unplugged.*

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## GENDER PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES IN ICT: A COMPARATIVE STUDY AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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### Abstract

Research has consistently shown that stereotypes about computer science exist among students, particularly in relation to gender. Ghorayeb, Comber and Gooberman- Hill (2021) and Sáinz et al. (2016) found that students hold stereotypical beliefs about ICT professionals, with a masculine portrayal being prevalent. However, these stereotypes are not always negative, and both boys and girls can hold counter-stereotypical beliefs. Cheryan et al. (2015) further emphasizes the role of cultural stereotypes in steering girls away from computer science and engineering, suggesting that diversifying these stereotypes can increase girls' interest in these fields. Funk and Parker (2018) add to this by highlighting the differences in perceptions of computer science between male and female students, with men focusing more on technical aspects and women being attracted to creativity and communication. The aim of this paper is to compare genders; information and communication technologies (ICT) and non-ICT students in terms of their attitudes toward people from ICT field, gender discrimination, and gender inequality. The research sample consisted of 225 university students from Slovakia (64.44% females) aged 18-26 years (M=22.82; SD=1.23). 24.44% of the students were studying within the ICT major. Attitudes toward people from ICT field were measured by four items on a 5-point scale, where 1 = strongly

disagree - 7 = strongly agree with the statement. The same was true when measuring attitudes towards gender discrimination (McDonald's  $\omega = .721$ ) (Beyer et al., 2005). Gender inequality was measured by The Separate Spheres Ideology Scale (Miller & Borgida, 2016) consisted of 15 items (McDonald's  $\omega = .811$ ). The differences between men and women (Welch's t-test) showed a strong effect within gender inequality (Cohens  $d = -.653$ ), where men perceived it at a higher rate than women. Further, differences with medium effect size (Cohens  $d = -.347$ ) were demonstrated between ICT and non-ICT students under gender discrimination (There is gender discrimination in the study of Computer Science.) where non-ICT students agreed with the statement to a higher extent than ICT students. The results of the pilot study can help understand how gender perceptions differ between ICT and non-ICT students and women and men. Understanding this is important for developing more inclusive educational environments in ICT disciplines.

**Keywords:** *University students, information and communication technologies, gender inequality, gender discrimination.*

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## **TECHNOLOGY COMPETENCE AND MOTIVATIONAL STYLES OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AS CORRELATE TO TEACHERS' PERFORMANCE**

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### **Abstract**

This study aimed to determine the technology competence and motivational styles of school administrators as correlate to teachers' performance which served as inputs for the technology-based leadership development program. The researcher used descriptive research design and quantitative method in this study to determine the leadership competence in instructional technology supervision and motivational styles of school administrators as correlate to teachers' performance. The respondents of this study were one hundred twenty-nine (129) school administrators and three hundred (300) senior high school teachers from the twenty-nine (29) public senior high schools in the Schools Division Offices of Marikina City, Pasig City and Quezon City, Philippines. The respondents rated the technology competence of the school administrators in instructional supervision and motivational styles as correlate to teachers' performance. Research results revealed that the two groups of respondents perceived the technology competence of the school administrators in terms of personal leadership, learning and teaching, talent management and planning and operations is *High Level*, while it differed in school culture. Further, they evaluated the school administrators' motivational styles as *Strongly Agree* in terms of expectancy and *Agree* in terms of valence and instrumentality. Hence, this yielded a significant difference in the perceptions of the two groups of respondents. Likewise, this also showed a significant correlation between the perceptions of the two groups of respondents on the school administrators technology competence and motivational styles as correlate to teachers' performance. This implied that programs should be developed within the instructional and technological leadership which should denote a common vision and promote growth in all variables. Based on the results of the study, a technology-based leadership development program was proposed.

**Keywords:** *Technology competence, motivational styles, technology-based leadership development program, descriptive research design, quantitative method.*

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## **A LARGE-SCALE STUDY ON MATH ANXIETY AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS (STEM)**

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### **Abstract**

Math anxiety (MA) is a world-wide appearing academic anxiety that can affect student mental health and academic performance. Using a very large sample of students in grades 7 to 10 (N= 7172), the present study examined how individual differences in MA predict students' attitudes towards Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) in Qatar. Females students showed higher levels of MA and more negative attitudes to STEM domains than male students. In addition, the results showed strong negative correlations between MA and STEM attitudes. Although close to zero partial correlation between gender and STEM was observed when MA scores were controlled, strong negative partial correlations between MA and STEM attitudes were reported, when gender was considered. Therefore, MA may moderate the impact of gender on STEM attitudes. Accordingly, providing psychological counselling for high math-anxious female students might be a successful avenue for improving their representation in STEM-related programs and careers.

**Keywords:** *Math anxiety, STEM attitude, math attitude, science attitude, engineering & technology attitude.*

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## **PERCEPTION OF VISUAL NARRATIVE AS A COMPONENT OF DIGITAL NATIVES' INTERNAL COMMUNICATION**

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### **Abstract**

In physical sciences, music has traditionally been considered an acoustic phenomenon because its perception is related to hearing. For a long time, most music recordings were distributed in exclusively audio formats. But with the development of a screen version of a song or film adaption of music and with the popularization of video streaming services in the last decade, visual representations have become available and are now one of the most popular challenges in music distribution, especially among the younger generation. The visual component is not a minor aspect of music perception, but an important factor in conveying meaning. The topic of this research is the analysis of the visual component of the music video or MV. This research aims to investigate the impact of visual cues on the perception of musical messages. This study seeks to understand how 86 art students from two Latvian universities perceive MV impulses within their internal communication systems. Participants watched Jonas Åkerlund's music videos and analyzed their perceptual effects individually and collectively during a discussion in a university auditorium. Art reception analysis was employed as the study methodology. Bourdieu's theory of mediated decoding operation was utilized to assess whether the students could decipher the video artist's message. Cognitive Dissonance Theory and Symbolic Interaction Theory were also employed to analyze the results, as internal communication research has been influenced by sociogenetic theorists and was thus utilized to ensure the proper processing and interpretation of the collected data. This is already the fourth study dedicated to analyzing the internal communication of digital natives through music video perception.

**Keywords:** *Digital natives, music video, Jonas Åkerlund, Pierre Bourdieu, intrapersonal communication.*

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## **MENTALIZATION, EDUCATIONAL STYLE AND LEARNING**

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### **Abstract**

The term Theory of Mind (ToM) defines the ability of understanding thoughts, emotions and desires of others. Precursors of ToM are Mentalization and Reflexive Functions experienced in the relationship with the figure of primary care. We can describe the Mentalization as a combination of self-reflective and interpersonal components. The Reflexive Function (RF) consists in the mental ability to manage the proper and the other ones behavior. In this way, children could respond not only to the others' behavior but also to their feelings, beliefs and expectations. In addition, an essential aspect is the educational styles to which they are exposed from the early experiences. It consists in two aspects: demandingness (requesting discipline from children) and responsiveness (emotional support). The first dimension includes the demands of parents regarding the observance of the rules. The second dimension includes the responsiveness of parents in child development by fostering his self-esteem, the perception of an individual identity and the self-regulation and the awareness of his abilities. On the basis of these two dimensions, we can identify four educational styles: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and disinterested. It has been highlighted that the authoritative parenting style is the one that allows a balanced growth of children because there is a balance between: demandingness and responsiveness. We examined 30 teachers of primary school with their own class composed by 20 students. In total we had 600 pupils. In order to assess the teachers' level of mentalization we administered every teacher with RFQ\_8 test after 4 months of school. After, we investigate children academic achievement with BVSCO-2, Test MT 3 Clinic and Test AC-MT 6-11. We found that a good level of mentalization, expressed in term of certain scale of RFQ\_8 had significance influence of learning skills measured in terms of errors and in terms of time. Our results show a correlation between mentalization skills measured in teachers and student learning in terms of reading, writing and arithmetic skills. The aim of this study is about how a good level of teacher mentalization could be positively related to children's learning.

**Keywords:** *Theory of Mind, Mentalization, educational styles, learning.*

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## SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

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### THE PREDICTIVE INFLUENCE OF THE BIG FIVE PERSONALITY TRAITS ON ADOLESCENT SELF-CONCEPT

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#### **Abstract**

In today's dynamic and changing environment, the adolescent's social environment and social inclusion are vital because of the formative influence of experiences with the social environment on the adolescent's self-concept. Self-concept is among the most important predictors of mental health and quality of life in contemporary adolescents. The underlying concept of the present paper is the Piers-Harris model of self-concept, which is viewed following the Big Five concept. The main aim of the present study is to analyse the predictive influence of the Big Five personality traits on adolescents' self-concept. The research population comprised 1 013 Slovak adolescents (73% female, AM age = 17.00, SD age = 1.27). The research instruments used were the ASCSS/Adolescents' Self-concept Short Scale (Veiga & Leite, 2016) and the Slovak version of the NEO FFI personality questionnaire (Ruisel & Halama, 2007). Correlational analysis showed several moderately significant relationships between the Big Five factors and individual dimensions and with adolescents' overall self-concept. Regression analysis subsequently demonstrated a clear predictive effect of personality on adolescent self-acceptance, demonstrating that personality traits are an important source of adolescents' self-definition. Mental health promotion also emphasises the promotion of a favourable self-concept in adolescents, which creates room for the influence of professionals in counselling or school psychology. The paper is part of the project VEGA 1/0765/21 Multidimensional self-concept of the digital adolescent generation in Slovakia and its contexts.

**Keywords:** *Self-concept, Big Five, personality, adolescents.*

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### LEADER'S SELF-EFFICACY AND GENERAL SELF-EFFICACY IN THE CONTEXT OF TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP

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#### **Abstract**

Self-efficacy is one of the most frequently analyzed predictors of leader effectiveness. We seek to offer an analysis of leader effectiveness through the most powerful self-regulatory mechanism influencing leader behavior in any organization, which is based on social cognitive theory - self-efficacy. The concept of general self-efficacy represents an individual's beliefs about his or her ability to successfully face specific job tasks or situations. The aim of the present paper is to analyze the interrelationship between general self-efficacy and specific leadership self-efficacy in the concept of the transformational leadership model. The research population consisted of 183 teachers - potential educational leaders with an average age of 43.5yrs. To measure general self-efficacy, the -General Self-Efficacy Scale (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995; in Kosci et al., 1993) was used to assess self-efficacy by the leaders themselves. Specific leadership self-efficacy was measured by the LSE - Leadership self-efficacy scale (Bobbio & Manganelli, 2009). Different types of transformational leader behaviors were measured by the LPI -Leadership Practices Inventory instrument (Kouzes & Posner, 2013). Our research findings suggest a clear association between general and leadership self-efficacy, and an analysis of the association between self-efficacy and leadership behaviors suggests that the multidimensional LSE scale is a more parsimonious instrument that corresponds better with the specificity of leadership than the broader construct of general self-efficacy. Practical applications of the LSE scale can be envisaged in the selection of leaders, their assessment and in training programs in the work environment.

**Keywords:** *Leaders self-efficacy, general self-efficacy, self-concept, education, transformative leadership.*

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## **SOCIAL ANXIETY AND SPEECH ANXIETY. THE MEDIATING ROLE OF CONFIDENCE AS A SPEAKER**

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### **Abstract**

Social anxiety is a condition experienced by a large number of people. An estimated 12.1% of U.S. adults experience social anxiety disorder at some time (National Comorbidity Survey, 2007). People with social anxiety often experience extreme self-consciousness and a strong fear of being judged, criticized, or embarrassed by others. This fear can be so overwhelming that it interferes with their ability to engage in everyday activities, such as attending social gatherings, speaking in public, or conversing with others. Furthermore, speech anxiety, also known as public speaking anxiety, is a psychological condition characterized by fear, nervousness, or apprehension when speaking in front of an audience or any situation that involves public speaking. This is often associated with physical symptoms such as trembling, sweating, and dry mouth, and cognitive symptoms like fear of embarrassment or prediction of poor performance and failure. The study is based on a cross-sectional design, with data being collected from a convenience sample of 206 participants (39 males, 167 females), aged between 18 and 35 years old ( $M=19.84$ ,  $SD=2.38$ ) through the following structured questionnaires: Social Anxiety Questionnaire for Adults (Caballo et al., 2012), Speech Anxiety Thoughts Inventory (Cho et al., 2004), and Personal Report of Confidence as a Speaker scale (Heeren et al., 2013) who measure the fear of public speaking. The results of the study suggest that both Social Anxiety ( $r=.606$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and Fear of public speaking ( $r=.766$ ,  $p<.01$ ) correlate with Speech Anxiety. Moreover, the two subscales of Speech Anxiety, namely Fear of Negative Evaluations and Prediction of Poor Performance also showed significant correlations with Social Anxiety ( $r=.576$ ,  $p<.01$ ;  $r=.579$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and fear of public speaking ( $r=.656$ ,  $p<.01$ ;  $r=.785$ ,  $p<.01$ ). Furthermore, fear of public speaking mediates the relationship between Social Anxiety and Speech Anxiety ( $z=7.960$ ,  $p<.01$ ). Practical implications of the recent study are discussed as well as some directions for future research in the area.

**Keywords:** *Speech anxiety, social anxiety, fear of public speaking, mediation.*

## **SLOVAK ADOLESCENTS' SELF-CONCEPT IN RELATION TO PERCEIVED PARENTAL ACCEPTANCE**

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### **Abstract**

Parental responsiveness is considered one of the significant sources of child and adolescent self-esteem. The present study aims to extend empirical knowledge in this area by focusing on the multidimensional self-concept of the Slovak adolescent population. The study aims to clarify the interrelationships between adolescents' self-concept in the Piers-Harris sense and perceived parental acceptance/rejection. The research sample comprises 1,013 Slovak adolescents (73% female,  $AM_{age} = 17.00$ ,  $SD_{age} = 1.27$ ). The research instruments used were the ASCSS/Adolescents' Self-concept Short Scale (Veiga & Leite, 2016) and PARQ-S/Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire Short Version (Rohner, 2005). The results of correlational analyses indicate moderate correlations between adolescents' overall Piers-Harris self-concept and perceived parental responsiveness for both mother and father. Subsequent linear regression confirmed both maternal and paternal overall rejection as a significant negative predictor of adolescent self-concept. Approximately 22% of the variability in adolescent self-concept in the Piers-Harris sense can be explained through these variables. Exploring adolescent self-concept in the context of perceived parental acceptance suggests its importance in forming self-concept even in mid-to-late adolescence. The results are interpreted and discussed in terms of both age and gender. Despite its limitations (self-report measures, sample characteristics, data collection), the study provides results that complement previous research and may be of interest to parents, caregivers, and educators, i.e., all who care about youth's mental health.

**Keywords:** *Self-concept, adolescence, perceived parental acceptance/rejection.*



## **EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EXPOSURE TO COUNTERSTEREOTYPIC FATHERS ON REDUCING IMPLICIT FATHER AND MOTHER STEREOTYPES IN JAPAN: II**

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### **Abstract**

An earlier study that exposed famous fathers as counterstereotypic exemplars suggested that, for men, exposure to counterstereotypic fathers can reduce the implicit father and mother stereotypes. However, for women, famous fathers might be considered a subtype of fathers distinct from ordinary fathers. Therefore, this study examined whether exposure to ordinary fathers who took childcare leave for at least 3 months can reduce the implicit stereotype that ‘fathers should work outside the home and mothers should keep the house’. The Implicit Association Test (IAT) was conducted among Japanese adults. The participants were randomly assigned to the counterstereotypic group or control group by gender and age group. 210 respondents (105 men and 105 women in their 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, and 60s) were included in the analysis. The results indicated that, in their 50s, the intervention reduced the implicit association between father and work and between mother and home. In addition, the implicit association between work and father and between home and mother was stronger for those in their 50s than for those in their 20s. Thus, for 50s, with strong implicit father and mother stereotype, exposure to counterstereotypic fathers can reduce the implicit father and mother stereotypes. In other age groups, however, the intervention did not reduce the implicit father and mother stereotypes. Therefore, future studies will need to examine interventions with stronger effects.

**Keywords:** *Stereotype, father, mother.*

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## **IMPACTS OF EMPLOYMENT DURATION AND WORK PERFORMANCE ON JOB MISMATCHED GRADUATES’ USE OF DEFENCE MECHANISMS**

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### **Abstract**

One of the employability challenges that most graduates face at present is securing jobs that are in line with their educational levels and fields (i.e., job mismatch). To overcome this challenge, graduates may use various types of defense mechanism (i.e., mature, immature & neurotic). Graduates who use mature defense mechanism tends to use or transform their negative feelings and thoughts into something that are less harmful and risky compared to those who use immature and neurotic defence mechanism. However, the use of defense mechanisms may be affected by employment duration and work performance. The present study was conducted to determine the impacts of employment duration and work performance on the use of each type of defence mechanisms. Of the 231 employed graduates who participated in the present study, 117 were job mismatched. Longer employment duration decreased their use of mature defence mechanisms. As for work performance, more graduates who perceived themselves as having higher work performance used neurotic defence mechanisms (undoing, pseudo-altruism, idealisation, and reaction formation), but the factor did not have any impact on their use of mature defence mechanisms (suppression, sublimation, humour, and anticipation) and immature defence mechanisms (projection, passive aggression, acting out, devaluation, autistic fantasy, and denial). The study findings can help make job-mismatched graduates aware of the impacts of their employment duration and work performance on their use of psychological coping strategies and can help employers understand the defence mechanisms used by their job-mismatched employees and the job factors that may drive them to adopt these strategies. The understanding from both parties may lead to a better productivity in the industry.

**Keywords:** *Job mismatches, self-defence mechanisms, graduates, work performance.*

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## HOPE AND FEAR OF PERCEIVED THREATS IN THE CONTEXT OF PROLONGED CRISIS

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### Abstract

In a previous study we examined and compared the predictability of the variables hope and fear of perceived threats as determinants for coping mechanisms during two major adversities, the COVID-19 pandemic and an armed conflict (Marciano et al., 2022). Our objective was to discern which of these two variables more effectively elucidates individuals' coping ability during such adversities: is it the primary emotion of fear or the secondary emotion of hope? Hope was found as a more consistent, stronger, and better predictor compared with fear of perceived threats. In the current study, we further explored the relative contribution of hope versus fear of perceived threats in a different form of adversity, a social and political crisis that unfolded in Israel over the past year. A total of 785 participants completed a survey administered twice during the prolonged social and political crisis (T1 in February 2023 and T2 in August 2023). Both measurements included questions concerning individual resilience (IR), societal resilience (SR, also known as national resilience), distress symptoms (composed of anxiety and depression symptoms), hope for a better future, and fear of the perceived threats (political, economic, health, and security threats). Using linear regression analyses, we tested the prediction of individual resilience, societal resilience, and distress symptoms, in both measurements, by five predictors: the level of fear of the following perceived threats 1) political, 2) economic, 3) health, 4) security, and 5) the level of hope. The current findings reaffirmed the pivotal role of hope as a coping supporter, as it was a superior predictor for all three variables compared to the fear of perceived threats, which were non-consistently predictive to a lesser degree. In addition, this predominance of hope over fear in predicting individual resilience, societal resilience, and distress symptoms was observed with respect to both T1 and T2. Moreover, similar results were also found in two new measurements of data that were gathered during the current war in Israel. In conclusion, hope emerges as a crucial factor for the individual's coping mechanisms in many different types of crises. This insight underscores the significance of fostering hope as a means to enhance resilience in face of ongoing adversities.

**Keywords:** *Hope, individual and societal resilience, distress symptoms, fear, coping with crisis.*

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## FACTORS RELATED TO ACCESS TO FATHERHOOD AND MOTHERHOOD

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### Abstract

The declining birth rate has been a social concern for decades. Socioeconomic factors are the most studied concerning the decision to become parents. However, it is a complex and far-reaching decision that is also influenced by multiple psychological, emotional, and relational factors. The aim of this study is to analyze these factors in a sample of women and men around the third decade of life through semi-structured interviews analyzed through Thematic Analysis. The results show that the decision in many cases changes over time and circumstances and that financial and labor stability and the couple's relationship are the most relevant factors when making the decision.

**Keywords:** *Fatherhood, motherhood, psychological and emotional factors.*

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## EXPLORING THE FACTORS INFLUENCING TURNOVER OF SLOVAK TEACHERS

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### Abstract

Turnover of teachers is major problem in society. However, most teachers point to problems that are not being solved and which lead them to turnover. It is necessary to emphasize that turnover is linked to a number of negative impacts (e.g., financial). Furthermore, turnover also has negative consequences on the remaining employees, performance. This is why it is necessary to focus on teachers and find a way to prevent the occurrence of turnover. The aim of the contribution was to explore which areas leading to turnover are the most important for Slovak teachers. 132 teachers (87.1% women), aged 24 to 68 (Mage=38.03, SD=10.20) participated in the research. Of the total number of teachers, 15.6% worked at preschools, 53.9% worked at primary schools, 13.3% worked at secondary vocational schools, 14.1% worked at secondary schools. The research sample was selected from teachers reachable via social networks or email, taking advantage of the snowball effect. Questionnaire consist of sociodemographic characteristics (age, gender, the type of school, length of practice) and the list of 27 areas related to the teaching profession. Teachers were asked to select a maximum of 7 areas they consider to be the most problematic in the teaching profession and for which they would consider leaving their job. The list of areas was created according review of the researched factors determining teacher turnover and turnover tendencies. Additionally, the teachers were also given the choice of adding another area, other than those specified in the compiled list. We identified the most problematic areas in the teaching profession. They were these, which were label by at least one third of the respondents, specifically remuneration (72.7%); job satisfaction (63.6%); students' behavior during classes (50.0%); stress linked to the teaching profession (47.0%); students' aggressiveness (45.5%); work with a minority group (42.4%); students' performance (42.4%); communication with parents (42.4%); class size (number of students in class; 33.3%); and working conditions (environment; 33.3%). We analyzed the importance of each area according the age, type of school and length of practice in more details. Results point to the importance of chosen areas of turnover among Slovak teachers and offer an opportunity for further exploration and creation of a complex scheme of mutual relations between factors of turnover. Based on this knowledge, we can work in the future on reducing negative factors and supporting positive factors in order to reduce teacher turnover.

**Keywords:** Turnover, Slovak teachers, factors.

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## THE FEASIBILITY OF A RETIREMENT PREPARATION PROGRAM BASED ON RESOURCES FOR THE BRAZILIAN CONTEXT

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### Abstract

The aging of the world population, especially in Brazil, is an achievement of contemporary society, although it presents challenging social, economic, and psychological impacts. Therefore, the increasing number of retirees in Brazil makes retirement an important area of study in psychology, as its transition brings significant changes in lifestyle, which are interpreted positively or negatively by individuals. Perception of retirement, satisfaction, and well-being during this phase are influenced by various factors, and retirement well-being, as proposed by the Resource Theory, results from the adaptations of individuals' physical, financial, social, emotional, cognitive, and motivational resources. In this perspective, an analysis of retirement is conducted focusing on the positive aspects present in individuals' lives, with the aim of strengthening these personal resources. Thus, Retirement Preparation Programs (RPP) emerge as an intervention possibility, seeking to deconstruct prejudices and reinforce the potentials

of pre-retirees, helping them to redefine this phase of life, support their decision-making, and generate well-being. Given the importance of RPPs, the research aimed to adapt a program model based on the resource theory for the Brazilian context, in order to provide the experience of retirement preparation for Brazilians. The developed RPP consisted of two experimental groups, and the intervention model comprised six pre-structured weekly sessions with the pre-retiree group. The first session was conducted to introduce the program, its objectives, and to reflect on the roles associated with work and retirement. The second session focused on discussing the individual resources present in each participant's life. The third session aimed to explore goals for retirement, while the fourth session addressed the identification of strategies for adapting to changes. The fifth session involved formulating potential actions to overcome retirement obstacles, and the sixth session served to conclude the group and reflect on insights derived from the program. The feasibility assessment of the study was conducted utilizing an evaluation form for the sessions by the facilitators and a final satisfaction form filled out by the retirees. The results enabled the identification of the feasibility of implementing the retirement preparation program based on resources in the Brazilian context. Building upon the initial feasibility evidence from the first groups, an expansion of the sample size and the implementation of a quasi-experimental longitudinal study are necessary to assess its effectiveness and psychological impact on the participants.

**Keywords:** Retirement, retirement preparation, well-being, intervention.

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## MEASURING CHEMOPHOBIA IN AN ITALIAN SAMPLE TO SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENT A SOCIAL MARKETING CAMPAIGN

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### Abstract

People often hold a predominantly unfavorable view of chemicals, primarily rooted in misunderstandings and apprehension. Chemophobia is an irrational fear of chemicals, characterized by an excessive concern regarding the potential dangers posed by chemicals and the belief that any concentration and level of exposure to them is harmful. The term “chemicals” is commonly associated with synthetic compounds, hence chemophobia is more prominently linked to the apprehension of exposure to man-made chemicals rather than those of natural origin. People exhibiting chemophobia often express a preference for chemicals derived from natural sources as opposed to synthetic ones in various products (e.g., personal and domestic hygiene, food). Individuals’ risk perception may significantly impact their decision-making and behaviors. Consequently, chemophobia has the potential to hinder people from making well-informed choices regarding chemicals and products. For example, individuals with high levels of chemophobia may reject certain chemicals and products, such as pharmaceutical drugs and vaccines, even if they are beneficial, simply because they are artificially produced and therefore are perceived as unsafe. Identifying factors that may mitigate chemophobia would be instrumental in addressing and reducing negative attitudes and behaviors toward chemicals. Within the planning of a social marketing campaign aimed to promote a more positive perception of chemicals, often contrasted with the concept of “natural substances”, and to counter chemophobia, the current study presents a first contribution to the evaluation of the psychometric properties of the Chemophobia scale in an Italian sample. The results confirm the single-factor structure of the scale. In line with the original scale, Item 7 shows a lower factor loading than the others; thus, the final version of the scale consists of six items. In general, good psychometric properties are found in terms of Cronbach’s alpha ( $\alpha = .86$ ), average variance extracted (AVE = .55), and composite reliability (CR = .88). The results are promising and future research could focus on the construct and criterion validity of the scale in the Italian context. This self-report scale may be a useful tool in the implementation of a social marketing campaign based on an informative approach. This approach may successfully reduce chemophobia by diminishing the perception of risk and fear associated with chemicals through an enhanced understanding of toxicological principles and awareness of the benefits derived from the use of chemicals.

**Keywords:** Social marketing, chemicals, chemophobia, healthy behavior, risk perception.

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## EXPLORING THE LINKAGES BETWEEN PERSONALITY AND EMPLOYEE-UNEMPLOYED HAPPINESS: PRELIMINARY STUDY

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### Abstract

Happiness has been decreasing regularly in Türkiye in recent years. This decline become more evident in new economic conditions. Therefore, whether or not you employed in a job having income may be determining factor in happiness level in these conditions. In this study, the role of personality traits in happiness was examined between those who are employed (earning income) and those who are unemployed persons in Turkey. The study was conducted in 2023 via a web-based form. The short form of Oxford Happiness Scale and the Big Five Personality Test were used in the study. The study included those who employed in an income-generating job (n=258, 73.9%) and those who could not find a job as they wanted to work (n=91, 26.1%). Aid volunteers, students, retirees, housewives, etc. are not included in the unemployed group. The participants were between the ages of 18-77 (mean=31.69, n=1192) and 167 were women (47.9%) and 182 were men (52.1%). In the study, first, participants were grouped as unhappy and happy groups according to the happiness scale total score average (mean = 3.61, s = 0.51). The participants below the average were defined as the unhappy (n = 159, 45.6%) and above the average as the happy group (n=190, 54.4%). According to the results, there is a difference between the five-factor total scores of the happy and unhappy groups in both the unemployed group and the employed group. Total score averages of the happy group are higher than the unhappy group in all five factors (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, Intellect / Imagination). However, the results differ when happy and unhappy groups are predicted by logistic regression analysis using personality factor scores and socio-demographic characteristics. Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability factor scores distinguished happy and unhappy groups in employees. On the other hand, among the unemployed, happy, and unhappy groups were distinguished by Agreeableness and Emotional Stability factor scores. Extraversion and Intellect / Imagination factors did not contribute to prediction in both groups. Conscientiousness differs in distinguishing happy and unhappy groups between employed and unemployed people. The results are discussed and implications for future research are provided accordingly.

**Keywords:** *Happiness, personality, employed, unemployed.*

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## FACILITATING ACCULTURATION IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS: AN ANALYSIS OF POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR SUPPORTING FOREIGN STUDENTS IN IRISH HIGHER EDUCATION

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### Abstract

In an era of increasing global mobility, Irish higher education institutions (HEIs) have seen a significant rise in the enrolment of foreign students, necessitating a deeper understanding and enhancement of acculturation supports. This study applies a social psychological analytical approach to a qualitative content analysis of policy documents, teaching guides, and program descriptions across a representative sample of Irish universities. Using reported social trust and individual psychological well-being as parameters, it evaluates the inclusivity and effectiveness of these existing practices and identifies areas for improvement. The policy review found a broad spectrum of acculturation supports, ranging from formal policies and orientation programs to informal support networks and cultural exchange activities, although with significant variability in the scope and depth of support across institutions. Notably, the study finds a prevailing emphasis on administrative and logistical aspects of acculturation support, such as visa assistance and accommodation; these systems are found to have limited impact on psychological well-being and social trust when compared to classroom inclusivity practices. The analysis of teaching guides and curricular materials indicates a growing recognition of the need for culturally responsive teaching practices. However, there is a clear need for more structured training and resources to equip

faculty with the skills to address the diverse needs of an international classroom effectively. The study also finds, based on prior studies and available survey data, that social trust, in particular “bridging trust” between identity groups and “vertical trust” between people and authority figures, are key to successful acculturation. Although 'bonding' trust between students of shared national origin is stronger than bridging trust, it also has a less positive correlation with psychological well-being than bridging trust, suggesting that students who have built relationships and social capital with others outside of their identity group are both most psychologically healthy and benefitting from acculturation. There is expected to be variation according to student nationality, as social trust is affected by the cultural and institutional context of students' national origin. The preliminary findings of the study are thus that inclusive teaching practices are most effective in building social capital between students and both schools and Irish peers, which in turn heightens the psychological well-being of these students. However, established logistical-administrative supports also have a positive effect on vertical trust, which is likely to have a positive effect on foreign students' academic performance. Greater emphasis is therefore recommended on standardising inclusive teaching practices in Irish HEIs.

**Keywords:** *Acculturation, foreign students, Irish higher education, inclusive education, social trust.*

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## **EXPLORING THE CURRENT CRISIS OF MASCULINITY AND RISE OF FEMINISM AMONGST YOUNGER YOUTH**

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### **Abstract**

The recent exponential rise in popularity of masculinity and feminism among young adults such as Millennials, Gen Z, and Gen Alpha could soon be a concern for the current generation. It is important to understand the reasons for such polarity in teens' thinking and how a balance can be restored so future generations are raised with viewpoint neutrality. Studies reveal a remarkable trend: women are making significant strides in primary and secondary education, higher education, careers, friendships, and innovations. Throughout the known history, masculinity has often taken the lead in driving major revolutions in almost all aspects of human civilization. Over the last half century, around the world, esp., in Westernized countries, governments have actively promoted and encouraged women's education, workforce participation, and independence to foster a sense of equality. The outcome has been phenomenal, women outnumbering men in many areas of achievement. As encouraging as it may be, it is equally concerning for the sociologists because men are falling behind in their part of the contribution to the modern society. Studies show that in elementary school boys get into trouble significantly more than girls and are more likely to be disciplined. Also, more boys are being diagnosed with social anxiety disorders in their early childhood. Medical science correlates that men who suffer social anxiety in their childhood are more likely to be diagnosed with substance abuse and antisocial personality disorder. I observed in school, and in social scenarios, that many young boys feel that they are “controlled” and cannot express or act naturally. They grow timidly and are afraid of being frequently socially judged if not faced with repercussions. This I believe starts from elementary school. This hypothesis I expanded into a 15-questionnaire survey with 272 respondents. The survey targeted towards young men and women ages between 12-30. These questions delved into the topics of their upbringing environment, education, family life, parts of childhood, and relationship experience along with their attitude towards masculinity and femininity. The focus of this research is to explore how young adults are suffering from the crisis of identity and purpose today and how this can impact their life and society at large. It is important to point out that man and woman isn't zero-sum: an intimate collaboration is required for a brighter future where boys and girls can grow up freely and to their full potential.

**Keywords:** *Masculinity, feminism, social progression, education, youth, relationships.*

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## DEPICTION AND DESCRIPTION OF WAR AND PEACE: A PILOT STUDY

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### **Abstract**

The aim of this study is to reveal adolescents' depiction and description of peace and war through drawings and semi-structured interviews. The study is a pilot study evoking two research questions: *How do adolescents reflect peace and war in their drawings?* and *How do adolescents reflect their opinions about peace and war?* Participants included 25 volunteer adolescents (12 boys and 13 girls) aged between 12 and 15 in one Estonian school. The participant students were asked to draw a picture of war and peace (Egüz, 2020) and the analysis of drawings was coded based on the war and peace categories developed by McLernon and Cairns (2001). Group-based semi-structured interviews were conducted about peace and war according to the adapted methodology (de Souza et al., 2006) and students' responses were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. Students used peace and war icons and symbols as interpersonal peace and absence of conflict in their drawings. In the interviews, the meaning of peace and war was defined as a social phenomenon between people and between countries. The students described war as conflict or violence and peace as in negative peace (absence of conflict) or positive peace (social justice). The analysis of drawings revealed that female students were more likely to depict emotions anger, sadness, happiness than male students. The male students however used more elements of weapons and elements like dead bodies or blood in their pictures to express war. Research on students' conceptualizations of war and peace is essential to the development of education programs in the field of social studies at the curriculum level.

**Keywords:** *Conceptions of war and peace, students' drawings, group interview, pilot study.*

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## THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP SELF-EFFICACY IN DEVELOPING ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL LEADERS

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### **Abstract**

Self-efficacy refers to a person's confidence in his or her ability to take action, engage in tasks and achieve goals. It enhances career engagement, which is the proactive development of one's career through demonstrating career management behaviors. Leadership self-efficacy is defined as someone's confidence in leading groups and regulating group functioning towards goal accomplishment (McCormick, 2001). This study investigates the relationship between leadership self-efficacy and career engagement.

Primary data was collected in 2021 using a cross-sectional survey. Participants (n = 330) from the United Kingdom and the Middle East, predominantly Egypt, completed a questionnaire which included: the *Multidimensional Leadership Self-Efficacy Scale (LSE)* (Bobbio & Manganelli, 2009); the *Career Engagement Scale* (Hirschi, Freund, & Herrmann, 2014); and a set of demographic questions. To the researchers' knowledge, it was the first time that these psychometric instruments were administered in the Middle East region. Both scales showed very good reliability ( $\alpha = .93$  and  $\alpha = .90$ , respectively).

Results showed that there was a moderate positive correlation between leadership self-efficacy and career engagement ( $r = .38$ ,  $p < .001$ ). More specifically, higher levels of leadership self-efficacy were interrelated with higher levels of career engagement.

This study, which is a part of a research project applying an intersectional lens on leadership, highlighted the value of leadership self-efficacy in promoting career engagement. A positive interrelation between the two theoretical constructs was confirmed, reiterating their importance and usefulness for academic research and practical interventions.

**Keywords:** *Self-efficacy, leadership self-efficacy, career engagement, career management behavior.*

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## LEGAL PSYCHOLOGY

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### EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES AND PERFECTIONISM IN ADULTS: A STUDY IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

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#### Abstract

Adversity in life is somewhat inevitable, and the consequences of adverse experiences in childhood are vast and detrimental. It is natural to expect negative and, in a way, antisocial behaviors and attitudes from the individuals who have survived adversity whilst young, but it is also common for the consequences of such experiences to create adaptive, even prosocial behaviors in individuals; example being perfectionism. Perfectionism is often, cross-culturally, viewed as a desirable trait that fosters excellence. The present study utilized a correlational research design to investigate the relationship between adverse childhood experiences and perfectionism among adults in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The sample comprised 351 adult participants primarily aged 18-25, residing in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Of the participants, 268 were female, 78 were male, and 5 chose not to disclose their biological sex. They were recruited using snowball sampling method. Participants completed a series of self-report measures to assess their adverse childhood experiences and levels of perfectionism. The Adverse Childhood Experiences Questionnaire and the Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale were utilized to collect data. The results revealed a significant positive correlation between adverse childhood experiences total score and total perfectionism score ( $r = .471, p < .05$ ), suggesting a moderate association. Linear regression analysis showed that adverse childhood experiences total score significantly predicted total perfectionism score ( $\beta = .471, p < .05$ ), explaining 22.2% of the variance.

**Keywords:** *Adverse childhood experiences, perfectionism, adults, Bosnia and Herzegovina.*

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### ADOLESCENTS LIVING IN A WAR ZONE EXPOSURE TO VIOLENT CONTENT RELATED TO CONFLICT ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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#### Abstract

**Introduction:** Exposure to Violent Content Related to Conflict on Social Media (VCRCSM) has a tremendous impact on youth due to the graphic nature of the content depicted and the young ages that are exposed to this content. This study provides insight into how adolescents living in a country in conflict zones experience exposure to VCRCSM. **Methods:** Thirty-one participants, ages thirteen to fourteen, participated in the study. Twelve were male, and nineteen were female. This research was conducted in three different schools in northern Israel. This research is based on in-depth semi-structured interviews.

**Results:** According to the findings, adolescents who do not live in the southern country where the military operation occurs still mentally participate in war by watching VCRCSM. The exposure influenced them emotionally (e.g. anxiety), physically (e.g. sleep difficulties) and mentally (e.g. changes in perceptions). In addition, it seems that the motivations for viewing VCRCSM concern the mass distribution that makes it difficult to ignore, curiosity and the need to belong socially. The coping mechanism presented the interpersonal option - turning to the parents, and the personal option - developing immunity and indifference.

**Conclusions:** This exposure is not limited to conflict-inflicted areas, and the exposure to VCRCSM affects people worldwide and, therefore, is a severe and alarming phenomenon on a global scale. Consequently, it is recommended that parents, educators, therapists and decision-makers provide legal, social, emotional and psychological support to deal with this phenomenon.

**Keywords:** *Violent content related to conflict on social media, war zone, adolescents.*

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## COGNITIVE AND EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

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### EVERYDAY MEMORY QUESTIONNAIRE [13-ITEMS]: EUROPEAN PORTUGUESE TRANSLATION AND PSYCHOMETRIC CHARACTERIZATION

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#### Abstract

Subjective Memory Complaints (SMCs) are very frequent in the community, but more markedly in older people (Ginó et al., 2010; Zapater-Fajarí et al., 2022). Several studies have indicated an association between SMCs and memory objectively measured, although the results maintain inconsistency. However, SMCs constitute an important symptom in clinical contexts which is usually associated with the search for clinical care. Scientific literature has reported several questionnaires to assess SMCs [e.g., Everyday Memory Questionnaire (EMQ) - 13 items; Royle & Lincoln, 2008]. However, in Portugal there are very few instruments that measure SMCs. This study aimed to translate and present preliminary psychometric data of the EMQ (13-items) for application to the Portuguese population. This instrument has been reported in literature as one of the most used instruments to assess memory complaints. Additionally, this study aimed to explore factors that could predict SMCs (i.e., age, depression, anxiety). The sample was composed of 344 participants (241 female), with ages between 18 and 80 years ( $M = 36.4$ ,  $SD = 15.9$ ). Participants completed the following self-report questionnaires: Sociodemographic Questionnaire, EMQ 13-items, Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA), Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II), and State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI-Y2). The results suggested that the EMQ 13-items presents good psychometric properties, specifically internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha of 0.92), and factorial validity (two-factor structure that explained 60.3% of the total variance), although the sample presents some limitations. In a sub-sample, some negative correlations were found between EMQ 13-items and MoCA subscales. The results also indicated that depression and age are predictors of the subjective memory complaints, a pattern of results found in studies with several instruments that assess memory complaints. Given that this instrument revealed good psychometric characteristics for a Portuguese sample, although this is a preliminary study, this constitutes a starting point for new studies (e.g., transcultural studies).

**Keywords:** *Subjective memory complaints, EMQ 13-items, psychometrics, individual factors.*

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### VARIABLES THAT ALLOW A RELIABLE CLASSIFICATION OF OLDER PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT LEVELS OF COGNITIVE STATE

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#### Abstract

To assess the general cognitive state and identify potential cognitive deterioration issues, screening tests such as the Mini-Mental State Examination have been widely utilized. Various studies have aimed to determine the socio-demographic variables (e.g., age, education) and cognitive abilities (memory, language, executive functions) most closely linked to the cognitive state assessed through tests like the MMSE. The primary objectives of this study were as follows: (a) assess the impact of socio-demographic variables, such as age and cognitive reserve, and other cognitive abilities (working memory, comprehension of written sentences) in accurately classifying a sample of older individuals with varying general cognitive statuses; (b) calculate optimal cut-off points for variables with the greatest importance

in classification, striking a balance between true positive rate (sensitivity) and false positive rate (1 - specificity). The participants comprised 159 Spanish older adults, aged 60 to 89, categorized into two groups based on their 35-item MMSE scores: those with scores equal to or greater than the 60thile (normal/high scores: N/Hs group) and those with scores equal to or lower than the 25thile (low scores: Ls group). All participants underwent tests evaluating working memory and comprehension of written sentences, including the digit reordering test, the sequential version of the ECCO-senior test, and the written sentence comprehension test of the Bateria de Evaluación de los Trastornos Afásicos (BETA; English translation: Battery for the assessment of aphasic disorders). Cognitive reserve estimation was obtained through Rami et al.'s Cognitive Reserve Questionnaire. Binary logistic regression analysis was initially conducted following a hierarchical method to identify significant variables explaining correct classification. Subsequently, ROC curve analyses were performed to determine optimal cut-off points for relevant variables, as well as measures of overall model quality. The final logistic equation incorporates cognitive reserve, digit reordering, and performance on BETA's sentences focused on the object and on sentences with one proposition not fitting canonical word order in Spanish in the ECCO test. Area under the curve (AUC), ROC and precision/exhaustivity curves, an overall model quality index, and optimal cut-off values were computed for all these significant variables. Results are discussed in the context of the reviewed literature.

**Keywords:** *Cognitive reserve, working memory, sentence comprehension, MMSE, ROC analysis.*

## COGNITIVE FUNCTIONS IN A SERIES OF PATIENTS AFTER ACUTE COVID 19 INFECTION – CASE SERIES

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### Abstract

The exact number of COVID-19 cases worldwide is unknown – it is estimated that the real number of cases is much greater than the laboratory-confirmed, positive patients. A large part of these patients, up to 85% according to some studies, present at a later stage with persisting heterogeneous non-specific symptoms, defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as Post-acute COVID syndrome (PACS, long-COVID or Post-COVID syndrome). Among the myriad manifestations of PACS, the most common are shortness of breath, fatigue, and cognitive dysfunction including impaired concentration and forgetfulness, all of which are negatively influencing the quality of life of patients. There is still no unanimous consensus, regarding the exact pathogenetic mechanisms of the long-term post-COVID manifestations and no established guidelines for their treatment. Therefore, it is necessary to continue the in-depth study of PACS and its cognitive symptoms. We studied 68 subjects with post-acute COVID syndrome (PACS) – using a detailed clinical interview, a non-contrast magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) brain scan and a computer-based neuro-psychological test - the CogState Brief Battery, assessing four core cognitive domains: processing speed, attention, visual learning and working memory. Our aim here is to present a case series of 4 subjects, in early and middle adulthood who have recovered from a mild COVID 19 infection in the previous year, and which showed hippocampal enlarged perivascular space (H-EPVS) on MRI. The analysis of the acquired test results showed that all subjects had lower (> 53%) than expected accuracy in one subtest of the CogState Brief Battery, compared to healthy individuals. Two of the participants performed worse on the same CogState subtest at follow-up on both outcome measures, compared to baseline. These results confirm the need for objective examination and follow-up of patients with subjective cognitive complaints with sensitive neuropsychological methods and neuroimaging.

**Keywords:** *Cognitive functions, computer-based neuropsychological test, post-COVID syndrome.*

## STUDY ON COGNITIVE PROFILES OF PARKINSON'S DISEASE PATIENTS WITH AND WITHOUT RAPID EYE MOVEMENT BEHAVIOR DISORDER

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### Abstract

Research indicates that nearly all individuals diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease (PD) experience disruptions in sleep patterns, often emerging in the early stages of the disease. The etiology of sleep disorders is intricate, but the pathological degeneration of sleep-regulating centers in the brainstem and thalamocortical pathways appears to play a significant role. Rapid Eye Movement Behavior Disorder (RBD) is defined as a parasomnia marked by the absence of normal skeletal muscle atonia during REM sleep and has been observed in approximately one-third of PD patients. In this study, with a focus on the influence of REM sleep on cognitive processes, the aim is to compare the neurocognitive profiles of PD patients, distinguishing between those with and without RBD symptoms. Individuals meeting the diagnostic criteria of the "United Kingdom Parkinson's Disease Society Brain Bank" were included in the study. Subsequently, the patients were divided into two groups based on their scores from the Rapid Eye Movement Behavior Disorder Screening Questionnaire (RBDSQ) (cut-off point=5), with clinical assessments also being considered. Patients demonstrating a tendency toward RBD were allocated to the RBD+PD group (n = 30), while PD patients without RBD tendencies (n = 42) were assigned to the RBD-PD group. The groups were matched based on age, education level, disease duration, Hoehn and Yahr stages, Unified Parkinson's Disease Rating Scale scores, and Clinical Dementia Rating stages. Cognitive functions were assessed using various neuropsychological tests, and the neurocognitive assessment lasted an average of 2 hours. Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS version 26, with the Independent Sample t-test employed for variables with a normal distribution, and the Mann-Whitney U test used for variables that did not exhibit a normal distribution. The results of the statistical analyses revealed that the RBD+PD group exhibited lower backward digit span scores compared to the RBD-PD group. Furthermore, phonemic and switching verbal fluencies were reduced, naming skills were impaired, and there was a decline in verbal immediate memory performance in the RBD+PD group compared to the RBD-PD group. Our results suggest that the presence of RBD is linked to decreased cognitive functions, with a notable emphasis on frontal dysfunction, in individuals diagnosed with PD.

**Keywords:** *Parkinson's disease, REM behavior disorder, frontal functions, neurocognitive assessment.*

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## ENVIRONMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

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### PRO-ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIOUR THROUGH THE LENS OF THE MINI-IPIP6 CONSUMER PERSONALITY SCALE IN SOUTH AFRICA

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#### Abstract

Daily habits and various antecedents play crucial roles in consumers' pro-environmental behaviour (PEB). Personality traits are significant for environmental engagement since they manifest in habitual green activities and infrequent high-cost decisions motivated by reflective thinking. Personality is also determined by complex interactions between physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, social, and environmental contexts in which individuals function. Hence, personality traits could be a key determinant of PEB. This research analyses the relationship of consumer personalities with PEB as daily green habits in the South African emerging economy context, which may differ from high-income countries. We used an online survey with convenience and snowball sampling to recruit South African respondents (N = 478) aged 18 years and older. The International Personality Item Pool six factors (Mini-IPIP6) scale was used to determine associations between specific traits and daily PEB, especially the honesty-humility (H-H) dimension, which is concluded to be the strongest predictor for PEB. The other five personality dimensions are agreeableness (A), extraversion (E), conscientiousness (C), neuroticism (N) and openness to experience (O). Descriptive data analysis, exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, and correlational methods were performed. Respondents generally show personality traits conducive to PEB ( $m_A = 4.02$ ;  $m_O = 3.83$ ;  $C_C = 3.78$ ;  $m_{H-H} = 3.65$ ). Correlations were shown between "C" and "conservation habits" ( $r = .261$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and "O" and "wasteful habits" ( $r = -.221$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). "H-H" correlated with "personal effort habits" ( $r = .230$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and "wasteful habits" ( $r = -.252$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Consequently, respondents who tested higher on these three personality dimensions (C; H-H; O) may perform more habitual PEB, thus revealing the utility of personality dimensions in understanding consumers' PEB in an emerging economy.

**Keywords:** *Daily habits, consumer personalities, emerging economies, Mini-IPIP6 consumer personality scale, Pro-Environmental Behaviour.*

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## TRAIT EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN WOMEN WITH BREAST CANCER: INVESTIGATING PATHWAYS TOWARDS DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMATOLOGY THROUGH BLAME

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### Abstract

*Introduction:* Breast cancer (BC) is a life-threatening disease that severely affects many spheres of women's lives. Trait Emotional Intelligence (TEI) has been shown to influence one's adaptation to a challenging clinical condition. In addition, previous studies have demonstrated how attributing responsibility for negative events or emotions to external or internal sources may determine varying levels of adaptation to one's disease. Hence, it seems crucial to explore these aspects concurrently in the context of BC. This study sought to examine whether the association between depressive symptoms and TEI was mediated by (self and other) blame. *Methods:* Questionnaires were administered to 290 individuals suffering from BC to assess the variables of interest and a path analysis was performed to put the hypotheses into test. Analysis of the covariance matrices was conducted using R and solutions were generated based on maximum-likelihood estimation. Path analysis was conducted to test a model with TEI as the predictor variable, Self-blame and Other-blame as mediators, and Depression as an outcome. Estimation of the saturated model was carried out, and therefore no fit indices were reported. *Results:* Results highlighted that TEI was negatively related to Self-blame ( $\beta = -.35$ ;  $p < .001$ ), Other-blame ( $\beta = -.32$ ;  $p < .001$ ), and Depression ( $\beta = -.55$ ;  $p < .001$ ). Moreover, depression was positively related to both Self-blame ( $\beta = .11$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and Other-blame ( $\beta = .14$ ;  $p < .05$ ). In addition, both Self-blame ( $\beta = -.04$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and Other-blame ( $\beta = -.05$ ;  $p < .05$ ) showed a mediating role in the relationship between TEI and depression. *Conclusion:* Results showed that proper clarity of emotion enables individuals to adaptively regulate their emotions in response to specific life events or situations. More specifically, a greater ability to think and process emotions is associated with a lower tendency of an individual to blame themselves for negative events or circumstances and to not attribute responsibility for their condition to external sources or other people. This, in turn, may allow for better interpersonal relationships and a lower risk of interpersonal distress. Clinicians may want to implement interventions aimed at fostering TEI in their BC patients to improve their psychosocial adjustment.

*Keywords:* Breast cancer, trait emotional intelligence, blame, depression.

## "I DIDN'T CHOOSE TO HAVE MY BREAST REMOVED": BRAZILIAN LESBIAN/BISEXUAL WOMEN'S JOURNEY THROUGH BREAST CANCER

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### Abstract

Gender and sexuality are social determinants of health. Recognizing and guaranteeing the rights of women and LGBTQIA+ people is a necessary condition for them to access better living and health conditions. The literature on breast cancer and female homosexuality explores how the disease and treatment have a different impact on the quality of life of lesbian and bisexual women. Considering these assumptions, this study aims to investigate the experiences of lesbian/bisexual women who have had breast cancer and how these experiences are elaborated during cancer treatment. This is a qualitative, interpretative, cross-sectional study that has as its theoretical reference the gender studies. Three lesbian women and one bisexual woman who were diagnosed with breast cancer participated in the research. To build the corpus of analysis, individual interviews were conducted in a face-to-face situation. The interviews were digitally recorded with the participants' consent, and the audio-recorded content was transcribed verbatim and in full. Subsequently, the data were analyzed and discussed based on reflexive

thematic analysis. The categories identified from the participants' interviews were discovering the diagnosis, tumor removal surgery, breast reconstruction, adjuvant therapies and hair and body hair loss. Even today, the diagnosis of cancer and the mastectomy take patients to stigmatizing places in society, which are related to the treatment of the disease itself, which, being very aggressive, causes various adverse reactions to occur in these women's bodies, such as pain, loss of movement in the arms, loss of hair and body hair, nausea, fatigue, among others. All four participants mentioned these aspects in their interviews, feeling each of the consequences of cancer treatment with greater or lesser intensity. The participants also mentioned that breast removal was a difficult aspect for them and that the chemotherapy sessions were worse than the radiotherapy sessions. None of the participants related their experiences during cancer treatment with their sexual orientation, which indicates similarities between the experiences of heterosexual and lesbian women regarding the oncological treatment. However, bearing in mind that the ideal of public policies is to offer comprehensive and humanized health care to all people, it is understood that giving a voice to sexual minorities to express themselves in the field of health is to give consistency to an organizing and structuring principle of humanization in care. This, in turn, broadens the opportunities for integrating sexual diversity into the context of cancer care.

**Keywords:** *Breast neoplasms, lesbianities, bisexuality, women's health.*

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The image features a teal, textured background with visible brushstrokes and some surface wear. On the left side, there are large, expressive orange and yellow brushstrokes. A white square frame is partially visible, overlapping the orange brushstrokes and the teal background. The word "Workshops" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font, centered within the white square frame.

# Workshops





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## CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

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### **AWARENESS INTEGRATION THEORY: AN EVIDENCE-BASED MULTI-MODALITY APPROACH WORKSHOP**

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#### **Abstract**

Awareness Integration Theory (AIT) is an evidence-based psychotherapy and psyche-education approach combining ideas from cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and body-mind theories. AIT promotes self-awareness, increases self-esteem, releases past traumas, reduces symptoms of depression and anxiety, and promotes a positive attitude toward implementing new skills for an effective and fulfilling life. The interventions promote the release, followed by integration through interventions that connect core beliefs, emotions, and the body. AIT enhances present-time mindfulness, clears the past, and envisions and creates a healthy future. Studies indicated a 60-76% decrease in depression, a 50- 60% decrease in anxiety, a 43% increase in self-esteem, and a 20% increase in self-efficacy after taking part in AIT approach. In this workshop, the nine principles and six intervention phases of AIT will be discussed in the lecture with combined experiential exercises. This workshop will benefit mental health professionals, coaches, and educators and offer tools for implementing the AIT in psychotherapy, counseling, research, and education. (50 + Participants)

**Keywords:** *Awareness Integration Theory, anxiety, evidence-based treatment, depression, psychological integration.*

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### **FACING CHALLENGES: THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL FLEXIBILITY**

**Danie A. Beaulieu<sup>1</sup>, Abigail Daley<sup>1</sup>, Derek J. Gaudet<sup>1</sup>, Cecile J. Proctor<sup>1</sup>, Patrick Hickey<sup>2</sup>,  
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#### **Abstract**

Individuals living with chronic illnesses face challenges that the general population may not have to face. Chronic illness is associated with lower health-related quality of life and subjective well-being. Typically, quality of life is used in medical settings as an assessment of overall physical and psychological functioning (Hays & Morales, 2001). In psychology, subjective well-being refers to the perceptions of one's life circumstances and the impact of positive and negative emotions (Diener et al., 2013). Our purpose is to explore ways to improve physical and psychological wellness, focusing on how different chronic illnesses affect overall well-being. Psychological flexibility involves being consciously present in the moment and engaging in behaviours or changing behaviours that are in alignment with personal values. Increased psychological flexibility is associated with better physical and psychological outcomes (Hulbert-Williams et al., 2015). One goal of this workshop is to use a series of demonstrations to illustrate how aspects of PF can improve wellness. Participants will complete a comprehensive measure of life satisfaction that includes the assessment of various life domains. Using average scores as a reference, we will discuss how different areas of life can be improved by increased psychological flexibility. We will lead participants through a series of exercises to highlight how PF affects wellness, focusing on strategies for change. We will discuss how PF can be targeted to improve outcomes in individuals with chronic illness. Although PF is targeted in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, focusing on improved psychological flexibility can help lower negative psychological outcome in non-clinical populations.

**Keywords:** *Subjective well-being, quality of life, psychological flexibility, stress management.*

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## MULTIFAMILY WORK - A SETTING FOR WHOLE FAMILIES IN GROUP CONTEXTS

**Klaus Henner Spierling<sup>1</sup>, & Miguel Cardenas<sup>2</sup>**

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<sup>2</sup>*Psychiatrist, Fundació Orienta (Spain)*

### **Abstract**

*Purpose:* Multifamily work is based on systemic therapy and combines the chances of working with groups and of family therapy. It describes a setting of working simultaneously with up to 10 families and shows good results in different working contexts like eating disorders, school problems or in working with multi-problem-families.

*Background:* Participants are to get familiar with the roots of multifamily work (e. g. work of Minuchin, Laqueur, Asen et la.) and with concrete practical exercises from multifamily sessions. Multifamily work combines principles and practices of systemic family therapy with those of group therapy. In group therapy, mutual support and constructive criticism, role-play and feedback are important aspects of the approach, as is the recognition that suffering is not an isolated experience and that other individuals may live in similar circumstances. The hope for change, often visible and embodied in other members attending group therapy, is another important factor.

*Key points:* Become familiar with multifamily approaches in general and specific multifamily settings like kidstime, no kids in the middle, multifamily classrooms and other school programs also based on ERASMUS. Get some impressions and experiences with MFT exercises and techniques.

*Procedure / Methodology:* After a short introduction (ppt-slides, eventually combined with a sort video) and an overview over the concept participants will get a chance to involve in practical activities that are typical for MFT-sessions. The workshop will close with some data reports and evaluation results from multifamily work.

*Description of the participants:* All participants interested in practical group works and innovative approaches when working with larger groups and families in need. A maximum of 40 participants is appropriate for the workshop – just as for the multifamily contexts presented. Participants will also get an idea of how to make use of the exercises in own working contexts and how to get further training if interested in multifamily

**Keywords:** *Resilience, multifamily groups, systemic approach, agency, creative activities, family work.*

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## GUIDED MINDFULNESS PRACTICES FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS: USING NATURE TO PRACTICE SELF-CARE AND REACH INNER PEACE

**Laleh Mehrad<sup>1,2</sup>, & Nicole Jafari<sup>1,3</sup>**

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<sup>3</sup>*Founder & Principal @Global Growth Institute, Inc. (USA)*

### **Abstract**

According to the World Health Organization Report (2022), 23 to 46 percent of health and care workers reported anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic, and 20 to 37 percent experienced depressive symptoms, while burnout factors rose to 52 percent. The risk factors and adverse mental health outcomes have also been reported to be higher among younger health workers, putting them in compromising positions of risking their overall well-being. In this workshop, the audience will learn the specifics of these risk factors and the adverse impact on the professional's physical and mental health. Using guided mindfulness techniques, the audience will learn how to use nature-based practices that are evidence-based and clinically proven to create protective factors, develop inner peace, and build habitual self-care practices. The primary goal of this workshop is to train healthcare professionals such as therapists, counselors, coaches, and medical professionals in the art of self-care through guided mindfulness techniques. The secondary goal of this workshop is to teach the audience how to advocate for their well-being by seeking effective interventional and supportive mental health programs while safeguarding their rights across their profession. Healthcare professionals often undermine their own well-being and

neglect self-care, leading to health risks and burnout factors. Practicing self-care ensures that the individuals in the care profession build the strength to fight off things like compassion fatigue, vicarious traumatization, secondary traumatic stress, and other common challenges mental health professionals face. This workshop will highlight the importance of sharing care responsibilities among self, organization, and governing states (Guy, 2000).

**Keywords:** *Nature, meditation, mindfulness, clinicians.*

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## **MINDFULNESS BIOFEEDBACK TREATMENT FOR IMPROVED ATTENTION AND OTHER COGNITIVE FUNCTIONS: TECHNIQUE, TOOLS AND APPLICATION FOR CLINICIANS AND RESEARCHERS**

**Rose Schnabel**

*PhD*

*Ontario Institute of Education, Emotion and Learning Optimization Lab, University of Toronto (Canada)  
Top Mind Institute and York Region Therapy Center (Canada)*

### **Abstract**

The purpose of this workshop is to help mental health professionals increase knowledge of combining brief mindfulness induction and biofeedback for improved focused attention and its application to other cognitive functioning. *Background:* Selective attention task including other cognitive tasks can be negatively impacted by individual emotional arousal levels such as overstimulation or underarousal (boredom). Impairment of emotion regulation can impact academics and sports performance in children and individuals across all ages with or without disabilities. Many individuals with OCD, ADHD, depression and anxiety have difficulty with emotional control, outbursts, and rage. Often individuals have learned tools to regulate emotions for improvement in focus and attention. However, the effectiveness of emotion regulation tools is often reliant on outcome such as increased focus, sustained attention, remembering names, executing task and achieving goals. Real time feedback on psychophysiological effects of emotion regulation tools such as mindfulness can improve individual's skills, awareness, and confidence in applying learned skills. Additionally, individuals can see in real-time through biofeedback the effects of emotion regulation skills on their psychophysiological responses and are more prone to trust and transference skills to real life situations. The lack of early detection/identification of emotions can lead to difficulty in regulating the escalation of emotions and achieving optimal states of cognitive functioning. *Key points:* Psychophysiological measures of the autonomic nervous system (Electrodermal Activity, Heart Rate, Breaths Per Minute, Temperature, Muscle Tension with the use of non-wearable and wearable sensors. Techniques for Biofeedback training and Cognitive tasks with the use of Multiple Object Training Task. Review and demonstration of Mindfulness biofeedback for improved cognitive functioning. Brief review of research will be presented in the area of Mindfulness Biofeedback. *Procedure:* Information will be presented by an expert in a discussion format, with interaction and questions from attendees. A brief demonstration of Biofeedback technique with an attention task will be provided. *Description of the workshop participants:* The workshop is for mental health professionals and/or researchers who wish to develop knowledge in Multi-modal emotion regulation technique such as Mindfulness based Biofeedback treatment for disorders that impact cognitive functions. Maximum number of participants will be 50.

**Keywords:** *Biofeedback, mindfulness, emotion regulation, component process theory.*

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## COGNITIVE AND EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

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### PREDICTING BEHAVIOR: WHY, WHAT FOR, AND HOW

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#### **Abstract**

The paper deals with predicting behavior in psychology. After introducing the importance of prediction in science and personal life, the failure of predicting behavior in two major domains - of personality traits and behavior and attitudes and behavior - is described. The implications, the attempts at improving the predictions and the conclusions are presented. The following part is devoted to describing the model of cognitive orientation which is a motivational-cognitive theory and methodology enabling the understanding, prediction, and changing of behavior in different domains, e.g., daily life, physical diseases and psychopathology. The basic constructs and processes of the model are presented.

**Keywords:** *Cognitive orientation, prediction, attitudes, personality, beliefs.*

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## HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY

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### **MOVING FROM CONSULTATION TO PARTNERSHIP: STRATEGIES FOR MEANINGFUL PATIENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT (PPI) IN RESEARCH**

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#### **Abstract**

**Purpose:** We propose an interactive workshop to explore strategies for embedding patient and public involvement (PPI) throughout the research cycle, with the overarching goal of fostering meaningful collaboration and partnership between academics, practitioners, patients and members of the public. **Background:** Participatory approaches have gained significant recognition as a means of enhancing the quality, relevance and impact of research. While funding agencies and policy makers emphasize the importance of PPI, the practical challenges of involving contributors in research can lead to tokenistic or “box-ticking” practices. PPI partners often play consultative roles in the initial and end phases of projects, with little input in the entire research cycle.

**Key Points:** This workshop introduces the concept of embedded PPI, emphasizing patient and public empowerment through partnership. The session will provide a roadmap for co-creation of knowledge and provide strategies for meaningful involvement. Participants will be invited to explore benefits of and barriers to embedding PPI and will collaboratively identify strategies and skills for initiating and maintaining partnerships with stakeholders.

**Procedure:** The workshop will consist of an in-person presentation and discussion centered around implementing PPI across the research cycle. Participants will engage in a hands-on group activity in which they will identify challenges to and strategies in the context of their own research. Through case studies and scenarios, facilitators will share their experience of participatory research.

**Participants:** This workshop is designed for researchers, educators and students interested in enhancing the real-world impact of their research. 5-20 attendees are recommended for optimal interaction and discussion.

**Keywords:** *Co-design, participatory research, Patient and Public Involvement, partnership, science communication.*

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