# INPACT 2025

## 26 - 28 April
## Budapest, HUNGARY

# BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Edited by
Clara Pracana
Michael Wang

WIARS
World Institute for
Advanced Research
and Science

# International Psychological Applications Conference and Trends

# (InPACT) 2025

**Edited by:**

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Full and Training Member of the Portuguese Association of Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic

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# FOREWORD

Dear Participants,

It is our pleasure to welcome you to the International Psychological Applications Conference and Trends (InPACT) 2025, held in Budapest, Hungary, from 26 to 28 of April 2025. 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 2025 received 489 submissions, from more than 42 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. 172 submissions (overall, 35% 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:

- A keynote presentation by Dr. Isabel Mesquita (Professor at University of Évora, Portugal and a Didactic Psychoanalyst at Portuguese Association of Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy).

This volume is composed of the abstracts of the International Psychological Applications Conference and Trends (InPACT 2025), 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!

Lasty, 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

## CHANGING INSIDE AND OUT: CONSIDERATIONS ON THE PSYCHOANALYTIC PROCESS AND THE ACTUALIZATION OF THE SELF

**Dr. Isabel Mesquita**
*Professor at University of Évora*
*Didactic Psychoanalyst at Portuguese Association of Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy*
*Portugal*

## Abstract

In psychoanalytic theories, as in human development, change is essential. The past is significant, the present is important, and creating the future is relevant. Stagnation in development is always a pathogenic factor that leads to illness and dissatisfaction. A key aspect of the psychoanalytic experience is the progressive recapture of the experience of the self, which may feel alienated and disconnected from personal and interpersonal discourse. This process enables the analysand to continually discover who they are and what they want to become, fostering a greater potential for both intrapersonal and interpersonal dialogue. Therefore, in the psychoanalytic process, it is crucial to understand and dismantle pathogenic relationships. This involves clarifying what the individual has done with their experiences and how these experiences shape their future. It is important to maintain the understanding that individuals are also influenced by their own actions in the present as they relate to their future. While a supportive, empathetic, and nurturing stance is necessary, a more interventionist approach is also required to help patients uncover new ways of experiencing themselves and their relationships. Additionally, the analyst must recognize the feelings and emotions that have not yet been expressed, so they can be acknowledged as real and integrated into the patient's personal experience.

*Keywords: Self-transcendence, transformation, experience of the self, new ways of being.*

## Biography

Isabel Mesquita is a Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Évora, with a PhD in Narcissistic Vulnerability and Love Relationships, is a specialist in Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy, and didactic psychoanalyst at Ap. She is a trainer and supervisor. She has been in private practice since 1992, worked in a health center for 14 years and has given various training courses to teachers and other technicians.
She is the author of two books published by Climepsi – Disguises of Love and What's New in Love?
She has published articles on narcissism and on the transformation of the self during the psychoanalytic process.

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# CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

## EXPLORING THE ROLE OF COMPLEX TRAUMA AND THE NEED FOR THERAPEUTIC ADAPTATIONS IN AUTISTIC AND ADHD INDIVIDUALS

**Liam Spicer[1,2], Emma DeCicco[3,4,5], Anna Clarke[6,7], Rikki Ambrosius[5], & Ozgur Yalcin[6,7]**
[1]*The Cairnmillar Institute, Hawthorn East, Victoria, VIC (Australia)*
[2]*School of Psychological Sciences, College of Health and Medicine,*
*University of Tasmania, Launceston, TAS (Australia)*
[3]*University of Western Australia, Perth, WA (Australia)*
[4]*The Dash - Health Hub, Perth, WA (Australia)*
[5]*STAND Attuned, Perth, WA (Australia)*
[6]*Divergent Futures, Brisbane, QLD (Australia)*
[7]*Deakin University, Victoria, VIC (Australia)*
[8]*Enable Institute, Curtin University, Perth, WA (Australia)*
[9]*ANIMA Health Network, Perth, WA (Australia)*

**Abstract**
Autistic and ADHD individuals are recognised as a distinct minority group, often experiencing a higher prevalence of co-occurring mental health conditions, including complex trauma. Studies consistently show elevated rates of PTSD, anxiety, depression, substance use, and eating disorders among this population compared to the general population. These mental health challenges are intertwined with developmental experiences, social influences, and ongoing adversity faced across the lifespan. Notably, complex trauma, stemming from chronic and repeated interpersonal victimization is increasingly recognised as prevalent among Autistic and ADHD individuals, contributing significantly to their mental health burden. Research suggests that up to 70% of autistic adults report experiencing at least one potentially traumatic event in their lifetime, with many meeting criteria for complex PTSD, often linked to social camouflaging and repeated experiences of invalidation. This presentation explores the role of attachment, unmet needs, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), and particularly the impact of complex trauma in shaping schema development among Autistic and ADHD individuals. Studies suggest a strong correlation between ACEs, complex trauma and negative mental health outcomes, with autistic individuals being up to five times more likely to experience four or more ACEs, increasing their vulnerability to trauma and subsequent mental health issues. Attachment patterns, impacted by early social and sensory experiences, are also discussed, considering that insecure attachment styles are significantly higher in autistic and ADHD individuals, potentially contributing to relational difficulties and emotional dysregulation. The presentation also discusses the need for a shift in the narrative surrounding Autism and ADHD within psychotherapy. It advocates for adapting therapeutic approaches, such as Schema Therapy, to address the unique needs of this population, with a particular focus on complex trauma. We will cover specific therapeutic considerations and adjustments required when applying schema therapy, such as addressing sensory sensitivities, accommodating different communication styles, acknowledging the impact of social stigma, and, most importantly, using a trauma-informed approach. Finally, it emphasises the importance of broader societal changes to prevent the formation and reinforcement of maladaptive schemas and complex trauma in Autistic and ADHD individuals throughout their lives, including promoting inclusive education, fostering supportive social environments, and challenging discriminatory practices.

*Keywords: Autism, ADHD, early maladaptive schemas, complex trauma, schema therapy.*

# SEEKING PROFESSIONAL HELP AND SATISFACTION FROM THE TREATMENT AMONG DISPLACED AND NONDISPLACED COMMUNITIES FROM WAR ZONES

**Liraz Cohen Biton[1,2], Miriam Schiff [1], Ruth Pat-Horenczyk[1], Rami Benbenishty[1,3], & Ohad Gilbar[1]**
[1]*Paul Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare, Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Israel)*
[2]*Ashkelon Academic College (Israel)*
[3]*Universidad Andrés Bello, Santiago (Chile)*

**Abstract**
Following the recent terror attack of the Gaza Hamas movement in south Israel on October 7, 2023, and the war in Gaza that followed this attack, several communities in this area were evacuated. They were placed in hotels in central Israel. Other nearby cities were not evacuated. About three weeks after the attack, we surveyed residents of the city of *Sderot* who were evacuated from their city (sample 1), and about eight months after the attack, while the war between Israel and Gaza Hams was still ongoing, we conducted another survey in the neighboring city of Ofakim who were not evacuated, despite being massively exposed to the October 7 events and the continuous war (sample 2). *Research aims:* Examining the extent of treatment-seeking from the Resilience Center and whether background variables, level of exposure to war events, and psychological distress predict help-seeking behavior in both samples and the level of satisfaction with the treatment in both samples. Samples: Sample 1 consisted of 881 displaced residents of *Sderot*, and Sample 2 and Sample 2 included 387 residents of an Ofakim neighborhood that was attacked by Hamas and were not displaced. Measurement scales included standard scales for ASD, PTSD, anxiety, and depression and questions that were tailor-made for this study. Results show high exposure to terror attacks and war events and high levels of psychological distress in both samples. About half of the participants in sample 1 and one-third in sample 2 sought professional help from the Resilience Centers. In sample 1, seeking treatment was associated with gender (women), being a parent, and higher levels of ASD. In sample 2, seeking treatment was weakly associated with the level of exposure to war and moderately associated with PTSD symptoms, anxiety, depression, and gender. Clients of the Resilience Center expressed high satisfaction with the treatment in both samples. This study highlights the importance of immediate psychosocial treatment for communities in war zones, whether evacuated or not.

*Keywords: Help-seeking, exposure to war, Acute Traumatic Stress, PTSD, crisis treatment centers.*

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# WHEN HOME BECOMES A MEMORY: THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES OF DISPLACEMENT AND LOSS

**Lili Khechuashvili, & Mariam Gogichaishvili**
*Department Psychology, Tbilisi State University (Georgia)*

**Abstract**
The Georgian context offers a rich foundation for studying ambiguous loss in displaced communities. While forced to leave their homes, many remain uncertain whether their displacement is permanent or temporary, sustaining hope for return. Adapting to a new environment is particularly challenging for those who spent most of their lives in their homeland, as they grapple with trauma, nostalgia, and a deep attachment to their "true" home. Limited access to mental health services further complicates their resettlement. This study explores how Georgian IDPs experience ambiguous loss, examining its psychological impact and coping mechanisms. A qualitative analysis of 10 life stories highlights an often-overlooked aspect of displacement, providing insights for professionals supporting forcibly displaced populations. Although the research is ongoing, preliminary findings suggest that even 17 years after displacement, individuals continue to struggle with ambiguity, feeling caught between their past and present homes.

*Keywords: Ambiguous loss, displacement, nostalgia, coping mechanisms, resettlement.*

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# PSYCHOSOCIAL CONDITION OF PSYCHOLOGISTS, PSYCHOTHERAPISTS IN TRAINING AND CERTIFIED PSYCHOTHERAPISTS WORKING IN COUNSELING

**Angelika Kleszczewska-Albińska**
*Education and Psychology Department, Management Academy of Applied Sciences (Poland)*

**Abstract**
Providing psychological help or support to other people means being exposed to suffering and all sorts of difficulties on a regular basis. Being an empathetic listener who stays attentive and responsive to other people's needs in such situations can result in emotional exhaustion of a professional. Taken together with no regular self-care and self-help it can lead to compassion fatigue or work burnout. A study was conducted in which the differences between the mean levels of psychological hardiness, perceived social support, and levels of secondary traumatic stress were assessed in groups of psychologists, psychotherapists in training and certified psychotherapists. Also measured was the mean level of early maladaptive schemas in each of the analyzed groups. The study involved a group of 180 respondents aged 24-76 (M=41.20; SD=9.66), including 162 women and 18 men who offer psychological help and psychotherapy to children, adolescents and adults. Among all respondents there were 59 psychologists, 38 psychotherapists in training and 83 certified psychotherapists. All of the respondents filled in sets of questionnaires that included Psychological Hardiness Scale, Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale, and Young's Schema Questionnaire. It was discovered that among people who do not supervise their work there are psychologists, while most psychotherapists in training and certified psychotherapists regularly supervise their work. Based on the gathered results it was discovered that there are statistically significant differences in the mean levels of early maladaptive schemas (namely: self-sacrifice, entitlement/ grandiosity, and negativity/ pessimism) between groups of psychologists, psychotherapists in training and certified psychotherapists. There was also a statistically significant difference between the mean levels of self-sacrifice schema between respondents who regularly supervise their work and those who do not attend supervision. The results obtained in the study can serve as a starting point for future research concerning risk factors and preventive factors observed in psychologists and psychotherapists working in counseling. It can also be useful while planning preventive programs aimed at maintaining high levels of well-being of mental health specialists.

*Keywords: Psychologist and psychotherapist well-being, psychological hardiness, secondary traumatic stress, maladaptive schemas, prevention.*

# EMOTIONAL IMPULSIVITY AND ATTACHMENT: A COMPARATIVE STUDY BY GENDER

**Fatemeh Shadi Zekriyazdi[1], & Nicolas Combalbert[2]**
[1]*EA 2114, PAVeA, University of Tours (France)*
[2]*U 1253, iBrain, University of Tours, Inserm, Tours (France)*

**Abstract**
Impulsivity is widely recognized as a central construct in personality psychology. This study investigates how emotional dimensions of impulsivity, as measured by the UPPS-P model, differ across four distinct attachment styles, with gender included as a comparative variable. A total of 693 women and 206 men, ranging in age from 18 to 84, completed the Relationship Scale Questionnaire to assess attachment patterns and the S-UPPS-P to evaluate impulsivity traits. Results indicate that the dismissive-avoidant attachment style was consistently associated with the lowest levels of impulsivity compared to the other styles. Statistically significant differences were observed between the dismissive-avoidant and preoccupied styles concerning both positive and negative urgency across both genders. These findings underscore the subtle yet meaningful associations between attachment styles, emotional impulsivity, and gender, offering valuable insight into the psychological underpinnings of impulsive behavior.

*Keywords: Attachment, emotional impulsivity, gender comparison.*

# SAFER-MH: FEASIBILITY STUDY OF A DISCHARGE PLANNING CARE BUNDLE

**Natasha Tyler[1,2,3], Sarah Croke[3], Richard Keers[2,4,5], Andrew Grundy[6], Catherine Robinson[7], & Maria Panagioti[1,2,3]**

[1]*NIHR School for Primary Care Research, University of Manchester (UK)*
[2]*NIHR Greater Manchester Patient Safety Research Collaboration, University of Manchester (UK)*
[3]*Division of Population Health, Health Services Research and Primary Care, University of Manchester (UK)*
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[6]*Mental Health Theme: NIHR Applied Research Collaboration - Greater Manchester (ARC-GM), (UK)*
[7]*Social Care and Society, School of Health Sciences, University of Manchester (UK)*

**Abstract**
Care transitions are widely recognised as a vulnerable, high-risk stage in the care pathway with multiple professionals involved across sectors. In the UK, a large proportion of people who died by suicide have recently been discharged from secondary mental health services. Improving systems, processes and support during this critical period has the potential to be life-saving. Patients being discharged from inpatient mental wards often describe safety risks in terms of inadequate information sharing and involvement in discharge decisions. Through stakeholder engagement, we co-designed a care bundle intervention, SAFER Mental Health (SAFER-MH), to address these concerns through the introduction of new or improved processes of care. We conducted a feasibility study to understand whether a definitive trial for SAFER-MH is feasible and, if so, how it should be designed, and how many patients/wards should be included. A before-and-after feasibility study design with a 6-week usual care phase followed by 6-week intervention phase was conducted on three wards in the North of England. During the intervention phase, all participants received the intervention. We used quantitative (validated questionnaires, e.g., EQUIP, CTM) and qualitative (interviews) methods to assess the acceptability and feasibility of SAFER-MH. This study report presents the qualitative findings of using the Theoretical Domains Framework to assess and understand implementation with 16 clinician interviews conducted during the post intervention phase. The Framework analysis highlighted issues that can be used to guide future implementation of the SAFER-MH intervention, indicating that most clinicians felt they had the knowledge and skills to implement SAFER-MH. However, focus should be on integrating the intervention into standard practice to mitigate the effects of external factors such as ward acuity, which was identified as key driver for nonadherence. The findings highlight the importance of the development and embedding of targeted Behaviour Change implementation strategies in future studies.

*Keywords: Mental health services research, care transitions, inpatient mental health services, communication, shared decision making.*

# INTELLECTUAL CONTROL AS INTEGRAL PART IN THE SYSTEM OF PERSON'S MENTAL RESOURCES

**Larisa Vinogradova**
*Consultation center Kyiv (Ukraine)*

**Abstract**
The article deals with basic approaches in the theoretical research of such unexplored topic as intellectual control. The sources of explored topic and basic theoretical approaches to the named phenomenology are examined. On the base of author's methodic is held the research of the intellectual control and in particular the interrelation between the intellectual control scale and the psychological regulation index by the Rorschach test. The role of intellectual control is defined as an important psychological characteristic, which determines the efficacy of the psychological regulation in the situation of social interaction.

*Keywords: Metacognitive experience, intellectual control, compensation, motivation of controlling, Rorschach test.*

# SPOUSAL BEREAVEMENT AMONG WOMEN IN TÜRKİYE: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF POST-LOSS AND COPING EXPERIENCES

**Nur Başer Baykal, & Ahmet Giden**
*Department of Psychology, Bartın University (Turkey)*

**Abstract**
Introduction: The loss of a spouse is considered one of the most distressing life events, linked to various psychological, social, and physical challenges. As such, it represents a significant stressor that may result in conditions such as depression and prolonged or complicated grief. This study aims to explore the emotional and practical experiences of spousal bereavement among women in Türkiye, focusing on how they navigate grief and cope with these challenges. Method: This study investigated the mourning process of eight women (age range 42-59) living in Türkiye using in-depth semi-structured interviews. The inclusion criterion is having lost a spouse at least six months ago. The data gathered from the interviews were analyzed by using phenomenological analysis in MAXQDA 22. Results: Two main themes emerged: post-loss experiences and coping experiences. The theme of post-loss experiences consists of two sub-themes: intense emotions and increased responsibility. Women expressed feelings of emptiness and pain after the loss of their spouse, as well as shock and paralysis. Some of them stated that they could not remember the first moments they experienced due to the shock. Participants also mentioned depressive symptoms such as hopelessness about the future, feeling disconnected from friends and family, and loss of a sense of pleasure. In addition, women talked about their increased responsibilities after the loss. Participants were worried about having to take on all the responsibilities, especially those related to the house and children, and it was difficult for them to think about these responsibilities along with the pain they experienced after losing their husbands. Another emerging theme was coping experiences, consisting of three sub-themes: receiving psychological support, social support, and religious beliefs and rituals. Some participants mentioned that psychotherapy and psychiatric medication support were beneficial for them. Others did not receive psychotherapy or medication support, resorted to religious coping mechanisms during their mourning process, and shared their pain with friends and family. Participants reported a sense of relaxation and spiritual peace with the small communities they formed with their friends and family members and the religious rituals they performed there. Conclusion: The findings provide insights for mental health professionals working with bereaved individuals, highlighting the role of both emotional and practical support in the grieving process.

*Keywords: Grief, bereaved women, bereavement, loss, meaning, qualitative study.*

# EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF SKIN DISEASES ON ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, LONELINESS AND QUALITY OF LIFE

**Ume Kalsoom[1], Hira Nauman[1], & Tanzeelah Nooreen[2]**
*[1]Department of Psychology, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University (Pakistan)*
*[2]Government Girls Degree College, Charsadda, Peshawar (Pakistan)*

**Abstract**
*Background/aim*: The aim of the current study is to find out the impact of skin diseases (acne, melasma, vitiligo, atopic dermatitis and alopecia) on anxiety, depression, loneliness, and quality of life. *Materials and methods*: Two hundred individuals with a mean age ($35.89 \pm 10.83$) participated in the study. Among these 100 were skin diseases patients, whereas another 100 matched in age, education, and socioeconomic status served as controls (healthy) group. The measures used were a demographic sheet, the hospital anxiety and depression scale (HADS), the Loneliness scale, and the WHO-Quality of life (QOL). Purposive sampling technique was used to collect the data. *Results*: Multiple regression analysis indicates a significant impact of predictor variables (acne, melasma, vitiligo, atopic dermatitis and alopecia) on anxiety ($R^2 = .76$, $p < .001$), depression (($R^2 = .78$, $p < .001$), Loneliness ($R^2 = .65$, $p < .001$), and QOL ($R^2 = .58$, $p < .001$). However, alopecia has no significant effect on the outcome variables. *Conclusion*: Acne, melasma, vitiligo, atopic dermatitis, and alopecia have significant effects on anxiety, depression, loneliness, and quality of life. Alopecia has no significant impact on the outcome variables.

*Keywords: Anxiety, depression, loneliness, quality of life, skin diseases.*

# GROUP THERAPY WITH CHILDREN/ADOLESCENTS: THE FUTURE OF MENTAL HEALTH

**Zipora Shechtman**
*Department of counseling and human development, University of Haifa (Israel)*

**Abstract**
Significant global events, such as pandemics, wars, or divorce, have led to increased levels of stress and anxiety, particularly for children and adolescents, necessitating profound changes in psychological services. However, the demand for psychological support far exceeds the available services for individuals of all ages worldwide, but more so for children. Based on research, group therapy is as primary or supplementary form of treatment, presenting an effective solution. However, children are not traditional clients, they require unique methods of group treatment. In this presentation I introduce small intimate groups based on emotional interaction, influenced by the Emotion Focused Theory (Greenberg, 2002). The goals of these groups are to reduce stress and anxiety and increase a sense of control. To achieve these goals, we use various therapeutic methods, such as art therapy, bibliotherapy, therapeutic cards and games. These methods are necessary to engage children in the therapeutic process. A large body of studies indicated the validity of such groups. In this presentation I will show the results of some selected articles. Specifically, they showed positive outcomes on the reduction of stress, aggression, anxiety, traumatic symptom, and behaviour problems, and increase in self-confidence, social relationship, school adjustment, and school achievements. Moreover, these groups were as effective as individual therapy, and more effective compared to psychoeducational groups. These groups are evidence-based, effective and efficient with various populations.

*Keywords: Group, therapy, child, adolescent, research.*

# REBUILDING COMMUNICATION AND CONNECTION: A GOTTMAN METHOD IN COUPLES THERAPY CASE STUDY

**Gyulnaz Halil**
*Clinical Psychologist (PhD Candidate), Ankara Yildirim Beyazit University,*
*Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Psychology (Turkey)*

**Abstract**
This case study explores the use of the Gottman Method in couples therapy to address communication breakdowns, emotional distance, and recurring conflict patterns. By identifying and managing criticism, defensiveness, contempt, and stonewalling—Gottman's "Four Horsemen"—the intervention helped the couple develop constructive conflict management skills and deepen emotional intimacy. Techniques such as "Love Maps," daily check-ins, and empathy-building exercises promoted mutual respect and reduced reactive behaviors. Findings suggest that the Gottman Method can enhance communication and foster empathy and resilience; however, achieving lasting improvements in empathy and resilience typically requires more than eight sessions and a sustained commitment to practicing these skills. This article presents a case study on the use of Gottman-based therapeutic interventions with a couple experiencing relational distress. By identifying and managing criticism, defensiveness, contempt, and stonewalling—Gottman's "Four Horsemen"—the intervention helped the couple develop constructive conflict management skills and deepen emotional intimacy. Structured across four stages, the therapy incorporated techniques such as the "freezer technique," the "love map" exercise, role-playing for empathy, and daily check-ins, aimed at fostering mutual understanding and effective communication. Over eight sessions, the couple made significant progress in addressing critical relational issues, including defensiveness, unmet emotional needs, and cultural boundaries. Findings suggest that the Gottman Method effectively fosters communication, empathy, and resilience, strengthening relationship bonds and commitment. The study concludes with limitations and recommendations for sustained improvement, emphasizing ongoing use of Gottman techniques, empathy exercises, and periodic therapy check-ins to maintain a resilient, fulfilling relationship.

*Keywords: Communication, Gottman method, case study.*

## RESILIENCE AND WAR-RELATED ANXIETY:
## EXPLORING ETHNIC DIFFERENCES

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*[2]Faculty of Psychology, The college of Law and Business (Israel)*

**Abstract**
Since the October 7th, 2023, events, Israel has been in a continuous war. The aim of the study was to look at the role of ethnicity and resilience as predictive factors of anxiety among Jews and Arabs, citizens of Israel, post October 7th events. The current study utilized a cohort, followed over 8 months in two time points. Before the October 2023 events (July 2023, referred to as T1), 512 participants filled in an online questionnaire of demographic details, resilience and anxiety. Of the 512 participants, 250 (126 females; 156 Jewish; M age= 42.12 (SD = 10.58)) filled post attack questionnaires (March 2024 referred to as T2). The post attack questionnaires included: Demographic information, resilience, and anxiety scales. Results showed that resilience at baseline was negatively associated with anxiety and that higher levels of anxiety are attributed to Arabs. Furthermore, the interaction term was significant as well, meaning that ethnicity moderated the relationship between resilience and anxiety. Conditional effect analyses indicated that resilience was negatively related to anxiety among Arabs only but not for Jews. These findings suggest different interactions of resilience with war related anxiety, between and within the two ethnicities. The empirical evidence yields critical implications for developing and implementing culturally responsive mental health interventions that honor diverse ethnic perspectives and lived experiences.

*Keywords: Resilience, war related anxiety, ethnicity.*

## AGAIN AND NEW LIFE EVENTS STRESS SCALE DEVELOPMENT STUDY:
## SCALE DEVELOPMENT AND INITIAL VALIDITY STUDIES

**Arkun Tatar[1], & Gaye Saltukoğlu[2]**
*[1]Department of Psychology, Manisa Celal Bayar University (Turkey)*
*[2]Department of Psychology, FSM Vakif University (Turkey)*

**Abstract**
In this study, life events were focused on assuming that life changes represent reasonable conceptual stressors. It is seen that existing measurement tools lose their validity after a while due to the dynamic structure of life and cultural differences. In this direction, it was aimed to develop a new stress scale based on current and life events. Thus, it was considered to use information about individuals' recent and current life events in the form of a self-report checklist for measurement purposes. The study began by writing items asking individuals to evaluate which life events they had recently experienced using short stem descriptors (e.g., change in economic situation...). 111 Items were written considering the literature and existing scales. Response options were created in which the items were asked to be scored as percentages between 1 and 100. The items were first applied to 1523 people, 697 male (45.8%) and 826 female (54.2%), aged between 18 and 70 (mean = 26.89, s = 10.47). The number of items was reduced to 50 through item analysis. When the items were ranked in order of importance, the first three items with the highest evaluation were "High cost of living", "Economic environment (inflation, economic crisis, etc.)" and "Death of a close family member". It was determined that the items were evaluated between 38.55% (Repairs, renovations in the apartment, street, neighborhood, etc. environmental and municipal services) and 82.00% (Cost of living) in the whole group, between 37.95% (Minor legal violations such as traffic tickets) and 84.72% (Cost of living) in the female group, and between 36.83% (Repairs, renovations in the apartment, street, neighborhood, etc. environmental and municipal services) and 78.73% (Cost of living) in the male group.

*Keywords: Stress scale, life events, stressors, scale development.*

# ALCOHOL USE DISORDER AND DUAL DIAGNOSIS: PROFESSIONALS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE PROVISION OF SERVICES TO CLIENTS IN MALTA

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**Abstract**
This study explores the experiences of professionals providing services to clients with Dual Diagnosis (DD), focusing on Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) within the Maltese Islands' unique sociocultural context, where alcohol occupies a strong cultural foothold. Against this backdrop, the research examines how professionals address, treat and manage DD. The study also investigates barriers to treatment, opportunities for intervention, and the most common co-morbid mental health conditions (MHC) accompanying AUD. Additionally, it examines the perspectives of professionals on the adequacy of local services for DD clients. Guided by a qualitative methodology and positioned in an interpretivist biopsychosocial framework, this study aims to capture the experiences and perspectives of Maltese professionals working in the field of addiction. Five semi-structured interviews were conducted with a psychologist, a therapeutic facilitator, two social workers and a psychiatric nurse recruited through purposive sampling from treatment services in Malta and Gozo. Adopting Braun and Clarke's six-step Thematic Analysis framework key patterns and themes were generated from the transcribed interviews. This inductive approach allowed themes to emerge organically, capturing the rich and nuanced perspectives of participants. A lack of resources, stigma, and institutional delays were the most frequently mentioned systemic barriers, yet embedded within these challenges were windows of opportunity, and turning points, such as moments of personal insights, small but significant achievements and external support that underscored the potential for meaningful change and recovery. The findings also highlight the need for more integrated service provision. Professionals often face a fragmented service infrastructure that exacerbates gaps in care, highlighting the pressing need for cohesive, forward-thinking strategies to address the complex needs of this client group. This study contributes to the limited research on AUD and DD locally, providing a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by professionals, and identifying opportunities to enhance service provision. The findings offer valuable recommendations for culturally sensitive, evidence-based strategies to improve treatment outcomes for individuals with DD.

*Keywords: Dual Diagnosis, Alcohol Use Disorder, professionals, specialised services, complex needs.*

# EXAMINING THE MEDIATOR ROLE OF EMOTIONAL REGULATION ON CHILDHOOD MALTREATMENT AND QUALITY OF LIFE IN YOUNG ADULTS

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**Abstract**
Early exposure to maltreatment can cause lasting harm to children's mental, social, academic, and emotional development. Individuals who experienced maltreatment as children may struggle with emotional dysregulation, which could then contribute to decreased quality of life outcomes. Exploring the mediating influence of emotional regulation may provide important insights into how childhood adversity shapes adult well-being. This study investigated the potential mediating role of emotional regulation in the association between childhood maltreatment and quality of life in Turkish young adults. A sample of 249 participants was analyzed using hierarchical regression in SPSS. Results indicated that childhood maltreatment significantly predicted difficulties in emotion regulation ($\beta = -0.529$, $p < 0.001$) and lower quality of life ($\beta = -0.392$, $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, emotion regulation difficulties mediated the impact of childhood maltreatment on quality of life ($\beta = -0.267$, $p < 0.001$). These results highlight the significance of addressing emotional regulation as a key mechanism in mitigating the detrimental effects of childhood maltreatment. Insights from this research can inform targeted interventions to improve the life quality for individuals with histories of childhood adversity.

*Keywords: Adverse childhood experiences, emotional dysregulation, quality of life, young adult.*

# HIGHS AND LOWS: PSYCHOLOGICAL FLEXIBILITY AS AN EXPLANATION FOR THE CANNABIS USE-MENTAL HEALTH RELATIONSHIP

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**Abstract**
*Background*: Cannabis use (CU) has rapidly grown worldwide. Cannabis use disorder (CUD) is associated with a three-fold increase in internalizing disorders such as depression and anxiety. Psychological flexibility (PF) encompasses an individual's ability to be open and accepting of emotional experiences (openness to experience; OE), and to adjust their behaviours (behavioural awareness; BA) to be in line with their personal values (valued action; VA). PF can be targeted and improved through Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), which has been shown to be effective for addressing depression and anxiety symptoms; however, the role of PF in substance use is less explored and mechanisms underlying the comorbidity remain unclear. *Rationale*: The aim of this study was to examine the mediating role of PF in the relationship between CU patterns (i.e., daily use, disordered use), and internalizing symptoms. *Method*: Individuals from an Atlantic Canadian University, the general population, and Prolific ($N = 525$) completed measures assessing CU patterns (meeting criteria for DSM-5 CUD, daily use), anxiety and depressive symptoms, and PF. *Results*: Daily CU was positively associated with depressive and anxiety symptoms. CUD symptoms were also positively associated with depressive and anxiety symptoms. Daily CU was negatively associated with PF total and with two PF dimensions (OE, BA). As expected, CUD symptoms were negatively associated with PF and with all three PF dimensions. Six mediation models were tested, with daily CU/CUD symptoms entered as independent variables, depression and anxiety as the dependent variables, and total PF or its dimensions as mediators. The three dimensions of PF (OE, BA, VA), and PF total partially explained the relationship between CUD symptoms, and both depressive and anxiety symptoms. The same was found for the relationship between daily CU and depression but only the dimensions of OE and BA mediated the relationship between daily cannabis use and anxiety symptoms. *Conclusions/Impact*: Problematic cannabis users appear lower in PF, which may partly explain why they experience more internalizing symptoms. Interventions aiming to increase PF, such as ACT, may be appropriate for such individuals.

*Keywords: Cannabis use, psychological flexibility, depression, anxiety, substance use.*

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# DESIGNING AND PILOTING A QUESTIONNAIRE TO UNCOVER CONSCIOUS AND UNCONSCIOUS MOTIVATIONS OF PSYCHOTHERAPISTS

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**Abstract**
Psychotherapists, psychologists and counsellors play a vital role in mental health care, offering treatment to individuals grappling with psychological difficulties. Research suggests that these professionals, who engage primarily in the work of psychotherapy, share a great deal in common and have been deemed by various researchers to constitute "the fifth profession". The conscious motivations underlying choosing and sustaining a career in these professions have been widely studied. These often include a desire to help others, intellectual curiosity, or interest in psychological theories, while unconscious motivations may stem from unresolved personal conflicts or a need for validation. Understanding these factors is crucial, as they influence therapeutic relationships, the effectiveness of interventions, and therapists' own well-being. Existing questionnaires have so far been limited to other specific professions, or tend to focus on motivations driving career choice in general. A questionnaire for assessing motivations to become psychotherapists could therefore offer valuable insights into the personal, professional, and unconscious drivers influencing career choice. A previous study using the Repertory Grid Technique (RGT), which gives access to tacit knowledge and unconscious motivations, found that besides altruistic motives to pursue the profession psychotherapists may also be driven by "darker" motivators. These include a need for power, financial gain and self-affirmation. The results of this study also point to the existence of traits which could

potentially interfere with the outcome of psychotherapy, such as unethical attitudes and behaviours, an inflated sense of self, and difficulties with empathy. The findings of this study were drawn on to compile a quantitative research tool in accordance with established scale development and questionnaire design techniques. In an initial phase this tool was piloted qualitatively and the results of this pilot study are presented in this paper. Future directions of this study include the administration of the scale to a representative sample of Maltese psychotherapists in order to confirm factor structure and to assess the reliability and validity of the final scale. This would constitute the second phase of the study. The results of this study have implications for the selection, training, supervision and continuing professional development of psychotherapists. The finalised instrument could be used as a screening tool when prospective psychotherapists are being selected for entry into professional programmes. It could also prove useful in informing the personal psychotherapy and supervision of existing psychotherapists. The questionnaire could also prompt reflection and self-awareness which remain fundamental as motivations evolve throughout a psychotherapist's career.

*Keywords: Questionnaire development, motivations, psychotherapists, career choice.*

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# NAVIGATING PANDEMIC DISRUPTIONS:
# A THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH AND BEHAVIORAL CHANGES AMIDST COVID-19

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**Abstract**
The COVID-19 pandemic led to the closure of educational institutions worldwide in an effort to curb the spread of the virus. This unprecedented shift profoundly impacted college students, triggering various challenges. Studies reveal that college students experienced heightened levels of psychological distress, including anxiety, depression, and disruptive changes in health-related behaviors. This qualitative study examines the experiences of 159 college students (29 males and 130 females) aged between 19 and 29 during the first weeks of April 2020 in Turkey. Participants completed sociodemographic information forms and wrote about how the pandemic affected their lives and health behaviors. They were analyzed using thematic analysis, providing insight into how the pandemic influenced their well-being. The findings revealed several key themes, including notable changes in daily health behaviors. Students reported alterations in their eating habits, sleep routines, exercise, personal hygiene, and adherence to social distancing measures. These behavioral changes were closely linked to various psychological factors. A significant portion of the participants experienced emotional symptoms such as stress, anxiety, and depression. Many also reported cognitive difficulties and somatic symptoms. Participants highlighted their challenges in coping with these behavioral and psychological changes. A common theme was the lack of access to social support systems during the lockdown, which made it difficult for students to manage their distress. Feelings of isolation and disconnection from their usual support networks further exacerbated their emotional struggles. However, while these changes were more intense in the initial stages of the pandemic, many participants reported a gradual adaptation to their new circumstances as time passed. Despite the restrictions, students demonstrated resilience by maintaining a sense of normalcy. Some participants engaged in home-based activities such as cooking, establishing daily routines, using relaxation techniques, journaling, and exercising indoors. Others found ways to maintain social connections, using phone or video calls to communicate with loved ones. These adaptive strategies helped alleviate some initial distress and promoted psychological resilience over time. In conclusion, this study underscores the profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on college students' psychological well-being and health behaviors. The findings highlight the importance of providing mental health support to students during crises and suggest that adaptive behaviors, such as maintaining routines and social connections, play a crucial role in mitigating the negative psychological effects of pandemic-related disruptions.

*Keywords: Covid-19 pandemic, health behaviors, college students, psychological distress, coping mechanisms.*

## PSYCHO-SOCIAL FACTORS IN OLDER ADULTS WITH BPD - PILOT FINDINGS IN DEVELOPING A SCREENING TOOL

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**Abstract**

BPD-OA is a screening tool being developed by Spectrum in Victoria, Australia, for Borderline Personality Disorder for Older Adults (60 years and above). The screening tool was initially trialled across two health services and found to be sensitive in identifying older adults with BPD in inpatient settings. As part of this pilot study was also the opportunity for psycho-social factors to be identified for older adults with BPD. These include history with trauma, substance use, self-harm methods, involvement of mental health support and dysfunctional family dynamics. The study has currently progressed to the next stage and has continued to identify some consistent findings. Of significance is that not all older adults in the study had been diagnosed with BPD at a younger age. Various life events such as the loss of a partner, retirement and estrangement with family can trigger emotional dysregulation and perpetuate depression and continued interpersonal conflicts. Given the vulnerability to isolation for older adults and less access to treatment and support services, the study provides an opportunity to not only establish the value of developing a screening tool for older adults with BPD but also consider important psycho-social factors as possible predictors and factors to address in clinical management plans.

*Keywords: Older adults, BPD, psycho-social factors, BPD-OA.*

## DIFFERENCES IN EARLY-ADULTHOOD ATYPICAL DEPRESSION, BIOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND ANXIETY BY ADOLESCENT DEPRESSION TRAJECTORIES

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**Abstract**

Atypical depression (AD) has historically been characterized by early-onset, distinct biological characteristics, and higher comorbidity with anxiety. However, its developmental course remains understudied in a truly developmental design. The current study used data from the Avon Longitudinal Study of Children and Parents (ALSPAC, n = 4433) to identify depression trajectories (12–18 years) via latent class growth analysis (LCGA). Three classes emerged: early-onset, late-onset, and low-risk. Using the Bolck–Croon–Hagenaars (BCH) method, the relationship between the trajectories and AD, metabolic syndrome, CRP, BMI (age 24), and generalized anxiety (age 21) outcomes were analyzed. The early-onset class showed significantly higher AD than the other classes. While early-onset sample also had higher anxiety, metabolic syndrome, and BMI, these differences were not statistically significant despite small to medium effect sizes, possibly due to the small sample size of this trajectory (n = 140). Interestingly, AD was correlated with anxiety across all classes. These findings underscore the long-term impact of early-onset depression and the need for further research to clarify AD's etiology and correlates.

*Keywords: Atypical depression, developmental depression trajectories, biological characteristics, anxiety, comorbidity.*

## THE WOUNDED HEALER PARADOX: PERCEIVED TRIGGERS OF DRUG RELAPSE AND RECOVERY AMONG PEER SUPPORTERS

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**Abstract**

The purpose of the present study was to examine the triggers for relapses among peer supporters, referred to as wounded healers, in the field of recovery from drug addiction. Despite extensive research on relapses, little attention has been given to individuals in recovery who support others while facing their setbacks. Participants were individuals with a history of drug addiction and criminality who experienced relapses and successfully returned to the recovery path. Using qualitative research design, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' subjective experiences of their recovery journeys, including withdrawal and re-recovery. Key findings reveal that disconnection from NA's 12-step program and recovering peers often triggered relapses, along with early romantic relationships and insufficient commitment to recovery. Furthermore, while empowered by their role as peer supporters, it also exposed unresolved personal issues, leading to what was described as the "savior-rescuer" paradox of the wounded healer. Nevertheless, lessons learned from past relapses enhanced their resilience and deepened recovery commitment. Rooted in the convict therapy perspective and related approaches, such as positive criminology and crime desistance, the study highlights the importance of social and recovery capital in peer support practices, it also offers valuable insights into strategies for relapse prevention.

*Keywords: Wounded healer, drug addiction, recovery, convict therapy, 12-step program.*

## THE IMPACT OF EARLY INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND NEGLECT ON EMOTION REGULATION IN MOTHERHOOD: EXAMINING LONG-TERM EFFECTS ON WOMEN'S MATERNAL ROLES

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**Abstract**

Childhood neglect and institutionalization are known to adversely affect emotional, cognitive, and social development. This study examines whether these early experiences influence emotion regulation and facial expression recognition in women transitioning to motherhood, both critical aspects of parenting. The sample included 44 women, 14 institutionalized mothers with young children, and 30 non-institutionalized participants. Participants completed an emotion regulation task using Ekman's facial expression photographs, a working memory distraction task, and the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ). Data collection was conducted online due to COVID-19, with analysis via one-way ANOVA showing no significant differences between the groups in emotion regulation or facial expression recognition. These findings suggest that early institutionalization and neglect may not directly impair emotion regulation relevant to motherhood. However, the study's small sample size, reliance on self-report measures, and limited ecological validity of tools likely constrained the results. Future research should address these limitations by using larger, diverse samples and exploring additional factors like attachment styles and parenting practices. While findings were inconclusive, the study underscores the importance of early interventions targeting emotion regulation and resilience in individuals exposed to neglect. Clinical and systemic efforts can mitigate the long-term effects of early adversity, supporting healthier outcomes for affected individuals and their children.

*Keywords: Childhood neglect, institutionalization, emotion regulation, motherhood.*

# IT IS NOT JUST ABOUT FLEXIBILITY: EXAMINING THE ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN PSYCHOLOGICAL FLEXIBILITY, BODY NEUTRALITY AND DISORDERED EATING BEHAVIOURS

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**Abstract**
Background: Disordered eating behaviours (DEB) refers to a spectrum and consisting of irregular eating habits, and distorted attitudes around food, weight, shape, and appearance and are one of the primary risk factors for an eating disorder (Pereira & Alvarenga, 2007). Understanding what tools could best intervene and alleviate DEB can help individuals *before* they develop more serious behaviours associated with eating disorders. Psychological flexibility encourages people to be consciously present in the moment and to engage in behaviours that align with personal values (Harris, 2006) and has been linked to fewer DEBs (Givehki et al., 2018). Body neutrality is a newer concept focusing on functional appreciation, body image flexibility, and compassion around appearance (Pellizzer & Wade, 2023). Although body neutrality shares commonalities with psychology flexibility, it has not been empirically evaluated. Thus, the purpose of the present study was to examine how the elements of body neutrality and psychological flexibility affected DEB in young adults. *Method:* In total, 418 participants completed an online questionnaire package that included the Eating Disorder Examination Questionnaire (Fairburn & Beglin, 1994), the Functional Appreciation Scale (Alleva et al., 2017), the Body Image Flexibility and Inflexibility Scale (Brichacek et al., 2023), the Body Compassion Questionnaire (Beadle et al., 2021) and the Comprehensive Assessment of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Processes (Francis et al., 2016). *Results:* Twenty-nine percent (29%) of participants met the clinical severity cut-off for an eating disorder based on EDE-Q scores (Velkoff et al., 2023). Pearson's correlations revealed a strong, moderate positive correlation between EDE-Q scores and body image inflexibility as well as moderate, negative correlations with body compassion and functional appreciation. A hierarchical linear regression indicated that all aspects of psychological flexibility and body kindness were associated with lower disordered eating. *Conclusion:* Aspects of psychological flexibility and body compassion predicted DEB and could be used in clinical interventions. Furthermore, it is evident that body image inflexibility may play a key role in the maintenance of DEB.

*Keywords: Disordered eating behaviours, psychological flexibility, body neutrality, body image inflexibility.*

# COGNITIVE FACTORS OF SOCIAL PHOBIA AMONG CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

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**Abstract**
Social anxiety disorder (SAD) is a common mental disorder in childhood and adolescence that is chronic and persists into adulthood. The present study aimed to develop a therapeutic tool through virtual reality exposure, designed for use in treating social anxiety among children and adolescents. The virtual reality exposure tool is intended to assist in overcoming emotional and behavioral challenges while facilitating the development of social skills Furthermore, the study explored the cognitive model of social anxiety in children and adolescents using virtual reality. The experiment included 200 participants aged 8 to 16 years. In addition to completing self-report questionnaires, participants engaged in virtual self-presentation (during the initial exposure) and an unpredictable arithmetic task (during the subsequent exposure). Pulse measurements were taken at the study's outset, during each exposure session, and at the study's conclusion. Among children and adolescents with social anxiety, heightened levels of self-attention, rumination, and negative content in repetitive thoughts following social events were observed compared to their peers without social anxiety. Across the entire sample, subjective anxiety level and pulse rate were highest during the self-presentation task. The study found that there was an association between the experimental group membership and the negative interpretation of environmental stimuli.

*Keywords: Social anxiety, virtual reality exposure, self-attention, rumination.*

## CORRELATIONAL STUDY OF SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS AND UNDIAGNOSED NEURODEVELOPMENTAL DISORDERS IN YOUNG ADULT COLLEGE STUDENTS

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**Abstract**
In the last 2 years, in the United States, there has been a significant increase in substance abuse for young adults. Individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders (i.e., Attention Deficit/Hyperactive Disorder [ADHD], Autism Spectrum Disorder [ASD]) are often diagnosed with co-occurring substance use disorders. This study is focused on screening 200 young adults (ages 18 to 25) who are college students in the USA for substance use disorders [SUD] and for ADHD and ASD (the measures will be presented in the native language of the participants-English with an option for Spanish). The hypothesis is that scores on the *TAPs Tool 1 & 2*, which measure symptoms of SUDs, will be positively correlated to screening measures for ADHD and ASD (*ASRS-vI.I and AQ-10 short*). There is a strong positive correlation between substance use and neurodevelopmental disorder symptoms.

*Keywords: Substance abuse, neurodevelopmental disorders, ADHD, ASD, young adult.*

## EXPLAINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SENSORY PROCESSING SENSITIVITY AND ALEXITHYMIA THROUGH ATTACHMENT STYLES

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**Abstract**
High Sensory Processing Sensitivity (HSPS) affects around 30% of people (Lionetti et al., 2018). It involves an increased reactivity to environmental stimuli. HSPS increases alexithymia (Bordarie et al., 2024) which corresponds to difficulties in identifying and describing emotions (Sifneos, 1995). Both contribute to an increase in psychopathological symptoms such as stress, anxiety and depressive symptoms (e.g., (Radetzki et al., 2021). This is particularly true during adolescence, a transformative period that makes individuals more vulnerable to mental health problems (Essau & De La Torre-Luque, 2019) and during which the social environment has a significant impact (Bathelt et al., 2021). For example, attachment styles - secure, preoccupied, dismissive or fearful - influence the ability to interpret and respond to emotional and social cues throughout life (Wilkinson & Walford, 2001). We tested two hypotheses: (1) HSPS will negatively influence both alexithymia and attachment styles; and (2) secure and fearful attachment styles will mediate the relationship between HSPS and alexithymia. The sample (n=148) consisted of 75.68% females (n=112) and 24.32% males (n=36) aged between 15 and 25 years. The mean age was 18.42 years old (SD=3.01). Regarding their status, 60.14% (n=89) were in high school, 29.05% (n=43) were in university and 10.81% (n=16) had a job. They anonymously completed an online questionnaire assessing high sensory processing sensitivity (HSPS-FR), alexithymia (TAS-20) and attachment styles (RSQ). Statistical analyses including correlations, linear regressions, and mediation models were performed with JASP (version 0.19.3) and Jamovi (version 2.6.17.0). Results showed that HSPS influenced fearful attachment style ($\beta$=.3400; $p$<.001) and secure attachment style ($\beta$=-.2396; $p$=.003) but not alexithymia which was influenced by fearful ($\beta$=.2891; $p$<.001) and secure ($\beta$=-.2812; $p$<.001) attachment styles. Both mediate the relationship between HSPS and alexithymia. This study is not in line with the literature that reports the influence of HSPS on alexithymia (Jerome & Liss, 2005). However, we confirmed the vulnerabilising effect of HSPS on alexithymia through the negative impact of fearful attachment style and the protective effect of secure, which mitigates the negative impact of HSPS. The discussion will underscore the importance of fostering secure attachment and emotional regulation strategies during adolescence. Limitations will be mentioned, such as the cross-sectional design, which precludes causal inferences, and potential biases in alexithymia prevalence. Future research should examine longitudinal effects and the role of psychological resources and coping mechanisms.

*Keywords***:** *Sensory processing sensitivity, alexithymia, attachment styles, internalized disorders, adolescents.*

# HELP-SEEKING EXPERIENCE, STIGMA AND MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY AMONG SLOVAK UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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**Abstract**

*Background:* University years can be stressful, making students vulnerable and reluctant to seek mental health support. *Aim:* This study aims to examine the associations between gender, self-stigma, social stigma, help-seeking experiences, and mental health literacy among Slovak university students. From October 2024 to January 2025, 321 students (M age = 22.18, SD = 2.34; 63.9% women) participated via online (32.7%) and paper-based (67.3%) surveys. Measures included The General Help-Seeking Questionnaire, The Self-Stigma of Seeking Help Scale, The Perceptions of Stigmatization by Others for Seeking Help Scale, and The Mental Health Literacy Scale. Data analysis utilized descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple linear regression. *Results:* Most university students (68.8%) had not sought help from mental health professionals. Among the 31.2% who had, their visits (M = 12.11, SD = 20.4) were generally perceived as helpful (M = 3.72, SD = 1.28). Students exhibited high self-stigma and mental health literacy, but low social stigma. Correlation analysis showed significant associations between gender, self-stigma, social stigma, and mental health literacy, as well as between self- and social stigma, and self-stigma and past help-seeking experience. Multiple regression analysis indicated that self-, social stigma and gender were negatively associated with mental health literacy, suggesting lower self- and social stigma correlated with higher mental health literacy. Female students exhibited higher mental health literacy than male students. *Conclusion:* This study highlights the need for education and awareness campaigns to reduce stigma and improve mental health literacy, ultimately encouraging help-seeking behaviors among students. Future research is needed to better understand the relationship between help-seeking experiences and mental health literacy.

*Keywords: Help-seeking experience, mental health literacy, self-stigma, social stigma, university students.*

# WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?
# DEFINING THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCT OF LOVE

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**Abstract**

The construct of love has been assessed through various self-report questionnaires, yet there is no clear evidence that these measures evaluate the same underlying concept. This study aims to develop a culturally sensitive definition of love through a two-part investigation. The first study examined the validity of eight widely used self-report measures related to love. A total of 565 adults completed the love measures, demographic questions, a 0–100 rating of love, and an open-ended question defining love. Factor analysis revealed inconsistencies, including more factors than originally reported, high collinearity among items, and some items failing to meet inclusion criteria (i.e., loading weight). The second study explored societal attitudes toward love in Western cultures using an Implicit Association Test (IAT). We hypothesized that cognitive load, measured by response latency, would vary based on the categorization of love-related words. A sample of 1,102 individuals from the United States and Europe evaluated 158 words as related to love or not. Results showed that participants identified love-related words more quickly than non-love words. These findings align with Prospect Theory and the Theory of Constructed Emotions, suggesting that love is a cognitively salient and culturally shaped construct. A definition of the socio-linguistic construct of love is offered founded on the statistical findings of these studies.

*Keywords: Love, prospect theory, theory of constructed emotions, socio-linguistic affective model of love.*

# PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE ELDERLY IN LATVIA: CHANGES IN COMMUNICATION PATTERNS

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**Abstract**
The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted older adults, a group particularly vulnerable to both the virus and the social isolation measures implemented to contain its spread. This study explores the effects of the pandemic on the communication patterns and psychological well-being of elderly Latvians, utilizing data from the Survey of Health, Ageing, and Retirement in Europe (SHARE). We focused on changes in social and digital interactions and their psychological ramifications across this demographic. *Methods:* To investigate these impacts, we analysed data from 744 respondents aged 50 years and older, drawn from the national component of the SHARE Wave 8, including COVID 1 Survey. The questionnaire included validated scales to assess changes in communication patterns, levels of social isolation, and psychological well-being, including scales for anxiety and loneliness. Descriptive statistics provided a broad overview of demographic characteristics and baseline communication habits, while chi-square tests were applied to examine the association between categorical variables such as age groups, digital communication adoption, and reported psychological distress. These methods offered insights into the direct correlation between increased digital communication in response to decreased face-to-face interactions and heightened levels of psychological distress among the elderly. *Results:* Results indicate a significant reduction in face-to-face social interactions with family, friends, and neighbours, particularly during the early stages of the pandemic. Concurrently, the use of digital communication increased as a substitute, though this adaptation was unevenly distributed. Individuals aged 50–59 were more likely to engage in digital interactions, while those aged 80 and above showed limited adoption due to technological barriers such as lack of access, digital literacy, and physical challenges like impaired vision or dexterity. Psychologically, the enforced isolation and communication changes had a profound effect. Many elderly individuals reported increased anxiety, sadness, loneliness, and even cognitive strain, exacerbated by the loss of regular face-to-face contact and the difficulties in adapting to new forms of digital communication. For some, digital interactions provided a crucial lifeline, maintaining connections with family and friends. However, for others, these interactions highlighted their limitations, deepening feelings of inadequacy and frustration. *Conclusions*: The study highlights the dual role of digital communication during the pandemic—acting as a buffer against isolation for those who could use it effectively, while underscoring the risks of exclusion for those who could not. These findings emphasize the need for proactive policies to address both the social and psychological vulnerabilities of older adults in times of crisis. Recommendations include increasing access to user-friendly technology, providing digital literacy training, and ensuring accessible mental health support to mitigate the risks of isolation and its psychological effects.

*Keywords: Elderly, psychological impact, social isolation, digital communication, Latvia.*

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# ALCOHOL USE BEHAVIOURS AND LIFE SATISFACTION: THE ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL FLEXIBILITY

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**Abstract**
In Canada and the United States, there is currently an alcohol use disorder (AUD) crisis (Lodge et al., 2022), which necessitates the development of interventions focused on addressing the high prevalence of alcohol use. Psychological flexibility (PF) involves being consciously present in the moment and engaging in behaviours that align with personal values. Increased PF is associated with higher psychological well-being (Francis et al., 2016) and more positive addiction-related outcomes, including higher treatment adherence and fewer avoidance behaviours and cravings (Lee et al., 2015). The primary objective of this research was to examine the mediating role of PF in the relationship between daily use/alcohol use disorder symptoms and satisfaction with life (SWL). In total, we recruited 525 participants ($M_{age}$ = 29.95 years, $SD$ = 16.81

years) from undergraduate psychology classes in Canada, the general population via social media, and Prolific, a crowdsourcing tool. Participants completed an online questionnaire package that included the Comprehensive Inventory of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (CompACT; Francis et al., 2016) to assess overall PF and subscales to measure behavioural awareness (BA), openness to experience (OE), and valued action (VA), daily/almost daily alcohol use (ASI; McLellan et al., 1992), DSM-5 criteria to assess AUD symptoms, and SWL scale (Diener et al., 1985). Overall, 89 participants reported never consuming alcohol, 31 reported consuming alcohol less than once a year, 70 reported consuming alcohol in the past year, 249 reported consuming alcohol in the past 30 days, and 72 reported consuming alcohol daily/almost daily. There were statistically significant zero-order correlations between SWLS and all aspects of PF, as well as inverse correlations between AUD and two PF subtypes, BA and OE. Two mediation analyses were conducted to examine if PF mediated the relationship between alcohol use and SWL. In the first model, the CompACT subscales did not mediate the relationship between daily alcohol use and SWL. In the second model, two dimensions of PF, VA (B = -0.0298, 95% CI -0.0555 to -0.0041) and OE (B = -0.0370, 95% CI: -0.0626 to -0.0115) partially mediated the relationship between self-reported AUD symptoms and SWL. These results highlight the mediating role of aspects of PF, specifically VA and OE, in the relationship between AUD and SWL. Interventions that focus on enhancing openness to both positive and negative experiences and focusing on personal values could help individuals with AUD maintain higher life satisfaction.

*Keywords: Alcohol use disorder, psychological flexibility, satisfaction with life.*

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# THE YOUNG SCHEMA QUESTIONNAIRE-REVISED (YSQ-R): RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ASSESSMENT OF EARLY MALADAPTIVE SCHEMAS

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**Abstract**
Early Maladaptive Schemas (EMS), arising from unmet childhood needs, are central to Schema Therapy. The Young Schema Questionnaire (YSQ) is the primary tool for assessing EMS, yet its psychometric properties have been subject to debate. This presentation highlights recent advancements in understanding and assessing EMS through rigorous psychometric evaluation of the YSQ and the development of the Young Schema Questionnaire-Revised (YSQ-R). Initial factor analysis of the YSQ-Long Form (YSQ-L3) using a large sample (N=838) supported 20 rather than the originally proposed 18. This analysis found that the original Emotional Inhibition schema is better understood as two separate schemas: Emotional Constriction and Fear of Losing Control. Similarly, Punitiveness was better represented by two constructs: Punitiveness (Self) and Punitiveness (Other). A subsequent study marked the first item-level psychometric assessment of the YSQ-L3 using Rasch analysis on a large clinical sample, providing further support for these findings. Findings revealed that 116 of 232 items showed poor fit. Removing the poorly fitting items resulted in a more psychometrically robust, revised version, the YSQ-R. This study also confirmed 20 rather than 18 EMS. This rigorous approach highlighted the need for a revised conceptualisation of specific EMS. Finally, a study compared the predictive validity of the YSQ-L3, YSQ-Short Form (YSQ-S3), and the Rasch-derived YSQ-R in predicting psychological distress across three psychiatric groups and a non-clinical group. Test equating ensured comparability between versions. Results indicated that the YSQ-R and YSQ-L3 demonstrated similar predictive power, while the YSQ-S3 showed limitations in predicting EMS and symptom severity in PTSD and Substance Use groups. These findings have important theoretical and practical implications. They suggest refining the conceptualisation of specific EMS and highlighting the YSQ-R as a more reliable and efficient tool for assessing schemas in both research and clinical settings. The YSQ-R offers the breadth of the long form with the brevity of the short form, making it a valuable instrument for advancing the assessment of EMS in Schema Therapy.

*Keywords: Schema Therapy, YSQ-R, Rasch analysis, assessment, Early Maladaptive Schemas.*

# EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

## PARENTING A CHILD WITH DISABILITIES: MEANING-MAKING, COPING AND STRESS-RELATED GROWTH

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**Abstract**

This study investigates the psychological adaptation of parents raising children with disabilities through the lens of the Meaning Making Model. Specifically, it explores how discrepancy between parents' global and situational meaning related to their child's disability impact their psychological distress, the initiation of meaning-focused coping strategies and their stress related-personal growth. The sample consists of 186 parents, predominantly female, and data was collected using several instruments measuring discrepancy between global and situational meaning, distress, meaning-focused coping strategies (i.e., benefit finding and turning to religion), and stress-related growth. Findings revealed that parents experiencing higher discrepancy in meaning used the strategies of benefit finding and turning to religion more, and reported greater personal growth compared to those with lower discrepancies. The study empirically validates the Meaning Making Model in the context of parenting children with disabilities. These findings underscore the role of meaning-making processes in fostering resilience and personal development among parents facing significant life challenges. For counseling, they imply that interventions should help parents reframe the meaning of their child's disability to align with their global beliefs, using strategies like positive reinterpretation and activating religious beliefs to alleviate distress and enhance coping and adjustment.

*Keywords: Meaning making, parenting, disability, coping strategies, stress-related growth.*

## ABILITY LEVELS OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN APPLYING SIMPLE PRINTMAKING TECHNIQUES

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**Abstract**

Art fields, which have been used as a treatment tool since ancient times, are still used today to support the well-being of individuals. In applications where art is used as a psychoeducational intervention method in schools, the techniques frequently preferred are pastel, watercolor, oil painting, drawing with acrylic paint, sculpture, ceramic making, and printmaking techniques. This study aimed to determine the application levels of simple printmaking techniques applied by children with special needs during art activities and to guide special education teachers and families while performing these applications with children through the results of this study. The research was conducted with 40 children aged between 4-13 who were receiving education in a special education center in Nicosia, selected by the purposeful sampling method. The research method is qualitative research and has a case study design. The data recording form developed by the researchers was used as the data collection tool in the research. The data were analyzed in 5 categories: simple printmaking techniques, techniques that children can do without needing support, techniques that they need support for, what kind of support they need, their reactions to the drawing activity, and whether the application tells its story. As a result, it was determined that children can perform techniques that they apply with direct contacts, such as hand printing and fingerprinting, without needing support, that they need support in techniques such as citrus printing, leaf printing, potato printing, and paper printing, that they need more support such as modeling and physical guidance, that they participate in activities with pleasure, and that they use mostly emotional nonverbal expressions in telling their stories due to their language developmental disabilities.

*Keywords: Art education, developmental disability, printmaking, psychoeducational intervention.*

## BE-FRIENDLY: A DIGITAL CLASSROOM PROGRAM TO INCREASE EMPATHY AND SELF-CONTROL AND REDUCE AGGRESSION

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**Abstract**
Children and adolescents may be exposed to complex social situations which can lead them to avoidance, anxiety and loneliness. With the aim of preventing boycotts and shaming phenomena and to strengthen children's self-confidence and sense of self-image, we developed an innovative classroom program that incorporates a digital interface for improving social and emotional skills among children and adolescents in the era of social media. During the sessions, challenging social scenarios are presented to the participants from different points of view through a digital interface. A chatbot prompts the children with questions about each scenario, encouraging them to reflect on their feelings and thoughts. The scenarios presented in the interface are used as a trigger for the discussion in the group. A preliminary study was conducted to evaluate the program impact. 45 children participated in the study, most of whom were boys (71%), aged 9 to 14 years. Study results were compared to outputs from the AI analyses of participants' responses which were assessed using narrative practices. Findings indicate a significant increase in children's self-reported empathy and self-control, as well as in parents' reports of their child's empathy. Additionally, there was a significant decrease in parent's report of child aggression.

*Keywords: Empathy, self-control, aggression, AI, social skills.*

## THE ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE DIMENSIONS AND TRAIT MINDFULNESS IN STUDENTS' FLOURISHING

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**Abstract**
Flourishing encompasses the socio-psychological prosperity of individuals and reflects feeling good and functioning well. Examining conditions and individual resources contributing to students' flourishing is an important part of positive psychology research in higher education. Some studies suggest that emotional intelligence (EI) and mindfulness contribute to students' flourishing. Since both EI and mindfulness are complex constructs, it is necessary to examine them at the dimension/facet level to understand their contribution to students' flourishing better. Also, in often highly demanding academic domain specific EI dimensions such as emotional self-regulation and self-motivation may be of great importance for students' flourishing. However, there is a lack of studies exploring the role of these specific EI dimensions as well as the role of specific mindfulness facets to students' flourishing. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the contribution of the specific EI dimensions i.e. regulation of emotion in the self (ROE) and use of emotion to facilitate performance (UOE) and specific facets as well as overall trait mindfulness to students' flourishing. A convenience sample of 124 university students at the Faculty of Teacher Education in Zagreb (97% female, 20 years on average) participated in a study by completing several questionnaires: the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale, the Five-Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire, and the Flourishing Scale. The correlation analysis showed that the EI dimensions i.e. ROE and UOE as well as mindfulness, both at facet and overall trait levels, were related to students' higher flourishing. Regression analyses showed that EI dimensions explained 44.8% of flourishing with ROE and UOE both being significant predictors. Also, regression analyses showed that three of five facets of mindfulness explained 40.2% of flourishing with observing, describing and acting with awareness being significant predictors. Finally, the results of hierarchical regression analysis showed that after controlling for EI dimensions, overall trait mindfulness, without observing facet, additionally explained 8% of flourishing. The final model explained 52.6% of flourishing with only the UOE and overall trait mindfulness remaining significant predictors of flourishing. This suggests that UOE and mindfulness have key roles in students' flourishing.

*Keywords: Emotional intelligence, flourishing, mindfulness, students, well-being.*

# SOURCES OF STRESS AND SUPPORT AMONG TEACHERS: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS AND ECOMAPS

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**Abstract**
*Background:* Teaching is considered one of the most stressful professions due to the number of responsibilities teachers have. Long-term stress often results in feelings of burnout, depersonalization, or exhaustion. Teacher support can have a significant impact on their well-being and performance, but can also impact students' academic development, including their affective and emotional outcomes. Therefore, identifying stressors and sources of support among teachers is essential to foster a healthier educational environment and improve overall educational outcomes. *Aims:* The aim of this study is to explore the main sources of support and stress that teachers experience, analyze the ways in which teachers recognize stress and its symptoms, and examine the quality of teachers' relationships mapped through their ecosystem. *Methods:* The study sample consisted of 25 teachers (mean age 45.5; 84 % female) from the eastern part of Slovakia who participated in four focus group interviews with an ecomap activity, which visually represents important relationships in their lives. The qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed using a six-step approach to thematic analysis. Ecomap data were evaluated through qualitative categorization of recorded relationships and quantitative assessment of their quality. *Results:* The thematic analysis of teachers' support revealed three main themes: support from the social environment, working conditions and demands, and specific sources as tools of teacher support. Thematic analysis of stress identified four main themes: Covid-19, teacher work, and other factors, including work-life balance, health, and social and political factors. The analysis also distinguished between physical and psychological responses to stress, which affect teachers' well-being and work performance. Furthermore, the results indicate that teachers' ecosystem is primarily formed through supportive relationships, although the work and its parts is the most frequent source of ambivalent or stressful relationships. *Conclusions:* This study highlights the importance of the support of the social environment, especially from school leaders and colleagues. Key stressors, such as time stress, bureaucracy, or student behavior, as the results of which teachers perceive their work as stressful, affect teachers' well-being and work performance. These findings emphasize the need to improve conditions and strengthen support for teachers, especially in the area of schools, which will contribute to their professional development, mental health, and performance in the educational process.

*Keywords: Stress, support, teacher, qualitative analysis, ecological system.*

# EXPLAINING AN IMMERSIVE MUSEUM ROOM FAILURE IN INCREASING VISITORS' ENGAGEMENT (PSYCHOLOGICAL IMMERSION) WITH ART WORKS

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**Abstract**
The failure of an immersive museum room to increase visitors' engagement (psychological immersion) with paintings and sculptures led us to try to understand why this was the case. The following three factors were examined: 1) The room lacked some characteristics of an immersive environment; 2) Visitors did not feel physically immersed; 3) Display of the art works was problematic. Research results show that only the third factor could be held responsible for the failure.

*Keywords: Museum, immersive room, visitors, psychological immersion, failure.*

# TEACHERS' EMOTIONS IN CLASSROOM AND THEIR JOB SATISFACTION: A MEDIATING ROLE OF REGULATION OF EMOTIONS

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**Abstract**
The increase in reported emotional difficulties, reflected in higher levels of stress and burnout among teachers across Europe, underscores the importance of developing a conceptual understanding of the underlying processes and support mechanisms for teacher well-being, including teachers' emotional competencies. The range of emotions that teachers experience in the classroom is diverse, both in terms of quality and intensity. These emotions have a significant impact on teachers' cognition, motivation and relationships with their students. Furthermore, research indicates that teachers' emotions are closely related to levels of burnout and job satisfaction and also influence the decision to leave the teaching profession. In this context, the experience of pleasant emotions and the use of more adaptive emotion regulation strategies contributes positively to job satisfaction. Research on teachers' emotions, emotion regulation and their effects on teachers' outcomes has gained increasing attention in recent years; however, such research has not yet been conducted in Slovenia. The present study uses in-service teachers' data ($N = 1,191$; 86.6% females) from a larger data collection entitled Positive Teacher Development Model: Interplay of the Individual (Motivational, Emotional, and Cognitive) and Contextual (School and System-Level) Assets During the School Year. After exploring the psychometric properties (validity and reliability) of the scales used, we analysed teachers' classroom emotions (joy, hopelessness, anger, pride, and love) as predictors of job satisfaction and a mediating role of emotion regulation difficulties between teachers' emotions and their job satisfaction. Finally, practical implications are discussed.

*Keywords:* Teachers, emotion, regulation, job satisfaction, Slovenia.

# MEANING IN LIFE, MEANING-FOCUSED COPING AND SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING OF PARENTS RAISING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

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**Abstract**
The relationship between meaning in life and subjective well-being is complex. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between global and situational meaning in life of parents of children with disabilities with their family satisfaction and subjective happiness as measures of their subjective well-being. In addition, the study examines whether the benefit-finding strategy, a strategy that focuses on meaning in life, mediates the relationship between meaning in parents' lives with their subjective well-being. The sample consisted of 186 parents, the majority of whom were female, who completed self-report questionnaires measuring the presence of meaning in life (as a global meaning measure), personal control (as a situational meaning measure), benefit-finding strategy, family satisfaction, and subjective happiness (as subjective well-being measures). Results showed that both the presence of meaning and personal control were positively related to family satisfaction and subjective happiness. In addition, the benefit-finding strategy was found to act as a mediating factor, i.e. it explained part of the predictive relationship between the presence of meaning in life and personal control with the dimensions of subjective well-being studied. These findings may be useful for mental health professionals aiming to improve the subjective well-being of parents of children with disabilities. In the counseling process, training parents in the benefit-finding strategy can empower them by replacing negative perceptions of disability with its positive effects or consequences.

*Keywords:* Meaning in life, subjective well-being, benefit finding strategy, parents, disability.

# THE ROLE OF DOMAIN-GENERAL FACTORS IN NUMERICAL PROCESSING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

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**Abstract**
Numerical skills are a major cognitive foundation of mathematical learning, especially in young children. Even though multiple prior studies have examined the isolated role of domain-general factors in numerical processing, the complex relationships between multiple domain-general abilities and numerical abilities have not been tested together. For the first time, we tested spatial skills, visuospatial short-term memory, visuospatial working memory, attention, executive function, and fine motor skills to determine whether they represent distinct constructs and correlate with numerical abilities and the development of numerical abilities independently, or whether they cluster into integrated constructs. Using an extensive sample of children (n = 339) of varying ages (between 3 and 8 years old), we examined the influence of domain-general factors on numerical skills. All participants were introduced to the GiantLeap app, an app designed to conduct child development evaluations in non-controlled environments. The evaluation process is divided into two modules: a series of engaging tasks for the child and questionnaires for the parents. We used factor analysis to cluster tasks into latent variables to analyze the data. Based on the results, we used Structural Equation Modeling with numerical abilities as the outcome variable. First and foremost, we discovered that spatial skills—including visuospatial working memory, visuospatial short-term memory, and mental rotation—directly and strongly affect numerical skills. Executive functions also affect numerical skills but to a lesser extent. Notably, executive functions made a unique contribution to symbolic numerical skills, dissociating symbolic and non-symbolic numerical skills. Interestingly, attention (tested by hyperactive symptoms and commission rates) had no direct or indirect effect on numerical processing. Age affected multiple tasks, but not in the same manner. It had the strongest effect on omission rate and numerical processing, with a weaker effect on spatial abilities (except for mental rotation, which was directly affected by age). Age did not affect attention. These results indicate that multiple factors can affect numerical performance. This conclusion bears significant implications for the early diagnosis of learning disorders and intervention methods for these disorders.

***Keywords:*** *Visuospatial short-term memory, visuospatial working memory, executive function, numerical processing, development.*

# THE USE OF SELF-PRACTICE/SELF-REFLECTION IN THE DELIVERY OF TRAINING IN PERSONAL CONSTRUCT PSYCHOLOGY FOR EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS IN TRAINING

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**Abstract**
Self-practice/ Self-reflection (SP-SR) refers to the process of applying therapeutic techniques to oneself and reflecting on the experience. Research on the application of SP-SR to therapeutic training has focused on cognitive behavioural approaches, with positive outcomes reported in terms of therapist empathy, perspective taking, and competence and confidence in the application of therapeutic techniques (Gale & Schroder, 2014). The present study explored the perspectives of educational psychologists in training on the impact of a SP-SR approach to training in Personal Construct Psychology (PCP) (Kelly, 1955). Participants engaged in self-practice using techniques derived from PCP including the Self-Characterisation Sketch, Drawing the Ideal Self and the Kinetic Family Drawing (KFD). Participants then reflected on the process with peers in a workshop setting. A survey completed following the workshop explored participants' perceived competence, confidence, self-awareness and perspective-taking. Participants also rated the likelihood that they would use these approaches in future practice and reflected on the overall process of SP-SR for PCP training. Survey findings are presented and implications for practice are discussed. Directions for future research are considered, particularly in the domain of teaching and learning in professional training in educational psychology.

***Keywords:*** *Educational psychology, personal construct psychology, self-practice self-reflection.*

# PERSONALITY TRAITS, PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL AND PARENTAL BEHAVIORS AS DETERMINANTS OF CAREER DECISION-MAKING DIFFICULTIES IN ADOLESCENCE

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**Abstract**

This study examines the impact of personality traits, psychological capital, and parental behaviors on career decision-making difficulties. It involved 560 students from various high schools in Croatia, assessed twice over the course of one year, in their third and fourth grades. Participants completed the Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire, the HEXACO-60 personality inventory, the Compound Psychological Capital Scale, the Parental Career-Related Behavior Scale, and a Sociodemographic Data Questionnaire. The results show a moderate level of career decision-making difficulties among students. Personality traits, psychological capital, and parental behaviors together explain 34% of the total variance in career decision-making difficulties. The findings also suggest that individuals with higher levels of extraversion and conscientiousness, as well as stronger psychological capital, experience fewer difficulties in making career decisions. Conversely, those with higher levels of parental interference and disengagement face greater challenges. Notably, psychological capital emerged as the strongest determinant, which is promising since it is more amenable to change through interventions. In conclusion, personality traits, psychological capital, and parental career-related behaviors significantly influence career decision-making difficulties.

# A CASE STUDY OF THE CHALLENGE-BASED LEARNING IN AN ITALIAN UNIVERSITY. THE PROJECT PROBEN

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**Abstract**

Universities are changing teaching methods that focus on student active skill development to address labor, social, environmental, and economic challenges. Experiential learning appears to be a must not only for education but also for companies in their recruitment and talent development processes. One of the most innovative approaches in this context is Challenge-Based Learning (CBL). In CBL, faculty (i.e., mentors, coaches) and students work together to address specific challenges, often involving external stakeholders. This study presents a case study of a national Italian project conducted at a university, examining the implementation of CBL to enhance occupational well-being. First, a literature review was performed to explore the theoretical foundations of CBL and its impact on skill development, employability, and well-being in educational and workplace settings. This review also examined how CBL fosters collaboration between academia and industry, bridging the gap between higher education and labor market needs. Second, a challenge was designed in collaboration with industry partners and stakeholders, focusing on real-world workplace issues related to occupational well-being. The challenge involves multidisciplinary student teams working on innovative solutions to improve workplace conditions, reduce stress, and enhance overall employee engagement. Third, the implementation process was developed, including the roles of students, faculty, and external stakeholders in co-creating solutions. Findings suggest that CBL is an effective pedagogical approach for developing critical thinking, teamwork, and adaptability while simultaneously increasing students' awareness of occupational well-being. Moreover, the study highlights the potential of CBL in strengthening university-industry collaboration and enhancing students' readiness for the workforce. The implications of this study underscore the need for further integration of experiential learning methods in higher education to foster employability and workplace well-being.

# SOME PERSONAL AND CONTEXTUAL DETERMINANTS OF CONGRUENCE BETWEEN VOCATIONAL INTERESTS AND EDUCATIONAL PROFILE OF ADOLESCENTS

**Toni Babarović[1], Lucija Butković[2], Eta Krpanec[1], Iva Černja Rajter[1], & Iva Šverko[1]**
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**Abstract**
Vocational high schools prepare students for specific career with limited opportunities for horizontal mobility, making it crucial for students to attend schools that align with their interests and support their career development. In other words, it is essential for students' interests to match the educational programs they pursue to achieve congruence, which, according to Holland, is a key determinant of positive career outcomes such as job satisfaction and success. The aim of this study was to examine the congruence between vocational interests and educational profiles among vocational high school students and to explore the role of personality traits and parental behaviors in achieving this alignment. The study included 335 second-year vocational high school students from various fields across several Croatian cities. Participants completed the HEXACO-60 personality inventory, the PGI-Short vocational interests questionnaire, the Parental Career-Related Behaviors Scale, and a general sociodemographic questionnaire. Congruence between interests and educational profiles was assessed using profile correlations, the Iachan M index, and the Brown and Gore C index. Results indicate that students achieve moderately high levels of congruence between their interests and educational profiles. Significant positive correlations were found between congruence and extraversion, conscientiousness, and parental support, while significant negative correlations were observed with emotionality, openness, parental interference, and lack of parental involvement. Personality traits and parental behaviors together explained up to 20% of the total variance in congruence, with emotionality, openness, and parental interference identified as significant predictors. Higher levels of congruence were observed in students who were less emotional, less open, and whose parents interfered less in their career decisions. These findings highlight the important role of both personality traits and parental behaviors in achieving alignment between students' interests and educational profiles.

***Keywords:*** *Congruence, vocational interests, educational profile, personality traits, parental behaviors, vocational high schools.*

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# ANSWERED AND UNANSWERED STUDENTS' OCCUPATIONAL CALLING DURING STUDYING: IMPORTANT FOR THEIR WELL-BEING AND WHY?

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**Abstract**
People who consider their work as a calling find it fulfilling, intrinsically rewarding, meaningful, and socially useful. Perceiving and living work as a calling is related to various positive work outcomes, both for the employee and the organization. Unfortunately, not all employees can live their calling at work due to various organizational or other contextual reasons. Unanswered calling leads to lower levels of well-being and job satisfaction. Although the construct of calling was mainly researched within the work settings, the perception of work as a life calling already exists among students during their studies. Research shows that calling is a salient construct for a substantial proportion of college students and is also related to higher levels of well-being. However, studies of unanswered calling in students are scarce. This study adds to the literature by exploring the role of both answered and unanswered calling in students. The aim of the study was to explore the relationship between students calling orientation, satisfaction of basic psychological needs, and well-being. A mediation model was proposed with basic psychological needs mediating the relationship between students answered and unanswered callings and academic satisfaction, students' burnout, and flourishing. Since calling is often associated with the teaching profession, our sample included 198 students (96.5% female), from the first to the fifth year of study at the Faculty of Teacher Education in Zagreb, Croatia. Self-report measures of unanswered and answered calling during studying (*Unanswered Calling Scale, Answered Calling Scale*), basic psychological needs (*Student Psychological Needs Scale*), academic satisfaction (*Academic Satisfaction Scale*), flourishing (*Flourishing Scale*) and students' burnout (*School Burnout Inventory*) were used. The findings of mediation analysis revealed that

answered calling was positively related to satisfaction of basic psychological needs which in turn increased students flourishing and academic satisfaction, and decreased academic stress. Contrary to that, unanswered calling was negatively related to the satisfaction of basic psychological needs consequently to lower flourishing and academic satisfaction, and higher academic burnout. These results show that feeling that one's calling is answered while studying is important for both students' well-being and ill-being. The results also point to the importance of interventions aimed at helping students view their future jobs as a calling. Also, university teachers should be encouraged to cultivate factors that can help students to have their future work calling answered during their studies.

*Keywords: Answered calling, ill-being, students' basic psychological needs, unanswered calling, well-being.*

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# SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS' ATTRIBUTIONS AND THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THEM, PRE AND POST COMPLETION OF A GRADUATE QUALIFICATION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

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**Abstract**
*Aims:* The study aimed to explore the factors that predict Irish special education teachers' attributions towards students with and without special educational needs (SEN). Predictive variables included teachers' role, length of SEN experience, graduate training status, teacher efficacy and attitudes toward people with disabilities. The relationship between teachers' roles (primary, post-primary, and special school) and their attributions towards students with and without SEN was also examined. Finally, a pre-post comparison group correlation was employed to examine if there were differences in special education teachers' efficacy for inclusive practice, attitudes towards people with a disability and attributions towards students with and without SEN, pre- and post-completion of a postgraduate qualification in SEN. *Method:* Special education teachers (SETs) enrolled in a Graduate Diploma (Grad Dip) in SEN completed the Teacher Attribution Scale (TAS), the Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practice (TEIP) Scale, and the Interaction with Disabled Persons Scale at the commencement of the programme (Time 1; N = 80) and upon its completion (Time 2; N = 35). SETs without a postgraduate qualification (Non-Grad Dip) also completed these questionnaires at Time 1 (N = 17) and Time 2 (N = 11). *Results:* Hierarchical regression analyses found that teacher role and teacher efficacy for inclusive practice predicted stability attributions for students with identified needs. Mixed factorial ANOVAs were conducted to further examine the effect of teachers' role. It was found that primary school SETs tended to report greater stability attributions in comparison to post-primary SETs and special school teachers. Using mixed factorial ANOVAs to compare Grad Dip and Non-Grad Dip teachers' attributions, efficacy for inclusive practice and attitudes at Time 1 and Time 2, it was found that aside from Grad Dip teachers having lower efficacy for inclusive instruction compared to Non-Grad Dip teacher, neither presentation of SEN, time, nor completion of a Grad Dip SEN or not, influenced teachers' efficacy for inclusive instruction, attitudes towards people with disabilities or attributions in any of the three domains. *Conclusions:* The findings highlight the importance of addressing teachers' roles and efficacy in inclusive education, particularly in managing stability attributions. They also highlight the need to explore the impact of postgraduate programmes in inclusive education on teachers' attitudes and beliefs.

*Keywords: Teachers' attributions, graduate education, inclusive and special education, teacher efficacy for inclusive practice.*

# SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

## MARITAL WELL-BEING AND PARENTAL POSITION AT FAMILIES WITH ADULT CHILDREN

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**Abstract**
The relationships between adult children and their parents remain an important social and emotional resource for both, but can also cause a range of difficulties. The marital and parental subsystems are interrelated, but these interrelations nature changes throughout the family life cycle. Most studies examine the consequences of leaving the parental home for young people, but - for parents - to a lesser extent. Some studies show that postponing leaving the "parental nest" can be detrimental to the well-being of the marital relationship and the parents' relationships with their adult children. Our study aim was to examine the nature of the relationship between marital relationships and the parental position of parents of adult children at different stages of the family life cycle. The main attention was focused on the "empty nest" stage, when there is a radical redistribution of marital and parental functions. There were parents, who lived separately from their adult children aged 22 to 35 years (30 respondents). The groups of comparison included parents at the previous stage - with older adolescents (39 persons), as well as parents with adult children, who still lived with their parents, i.e., with a protracted separation (26 respondents). The whole study sample consisted of 95 people (30 men and 65 women) aged 41 to 64 years. The following methods were used in this study: "Family Communication" by Yu. Alyoshina et al., "Triangular Love Scale" by R. Stenberg, "Relationship Assessment Scale" by S. Hendrick, "Parental Position in Relation to Adult Children" by R. Egorov & I. Shapovalenko. We came to the following conclusions. The well-being of marital relations is associated with the parental position at different stages of the family life cycle differently. In general, at the *empty nest stage*, there is a deeper closeness both between spouses and with children. The interactions with children are based more on mutual understanding. At this stage, parents are less focused on children and are more focused on marital relations. In spouses, *living together with adult children*, marital relationships are not interconnected with the level of acceptance of the child, but are associated with control over the child. In *families with adolescents*, no correlations were found between marital relations and the parental position, which may indicate a greater concentration of spouses on the parental function. These results allow us to determine the foci of psychotherapeutic influence in psychological assistance to families with adult children more accurately.

*Keywords: Marital well-being, parental position, empty nest stage, adolescent, child-parent relationships.*

## WOMEN REBEL MORE AGAINST MALE AUTHORITY THAN AGAINST FEMALE AUTHORITY

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**Abstract**
It is hypothesized that the influence of a source of authority varies according to his/her competence and genre. It is also expected variations of influence depending on the subordinate gender. 240 participants, in four groups of 30 men and 30 women, answered an allegiance at work questionnaire. A competency and a gender effect are observed. It is particularly noted that, confronted with a competent leader, the submission of women is superior to their insubordination only if the leader is a woman, and that, conversely, confronted with an incompetent leader, the insubordination of women does not take precedence over their submission only when the leader is a man. An analysis in terms of male and female management style is proposed.

*Keywords: Social influence, power of authority, competence, gender.*

# CYBERBULLYING AND SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE HABITS AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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**Abstract**
The use of social media and cyberbullying are currently inextricably linked among young people. Social media allows young people to socialise, communicate and share large amounts of personal data. All of this makes it a suitable platform for committing and experiencing violence among peers. The problematic use of social media poses a risk of an increase in cyberbullying and cybervictimisation. The aim of this study was to examine the prevalence of online violence among primary school students in Croatia. In addition, the study focused on exploring the relationship between cyberbullying, social media use and social media addiction among girls and boys. A total of N=1872 students (47.7% male, 49.9% female) between the ages of 12 and 16 participated in the study ($M_{age}$=13.22; SD=0.63). The European Cyberbullying Intervention Project Questionnaire (ECIPQ, Del Rey et al., 2015) and the Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (Andreassen et al., 2012) were used. The participants were also asked about the frequency of their social media use on weekdays and weekends. The study results show that when it comes to cyberbullying, whether it is committing it or experiencing it, participants reported that in the past two months the more frequent behaviour was excluding or ignoring someone on a social networking site or in an Internet chatroom, followed by saying mean things directly to the person or to someone else about them. About 40% of participants spend three hours or more on social networking sites during the workday and 62% during the weekend, while 1.6% meets the criteria for problematic use of social media. As hypothesised, cyberbullying and cybervictimisation were positively correlated with more frequent social media use and more pronounced symptoms of social media addiction. These correlations were somewhat stronger for girls. This study confirms the hypothesis that time spent on social media is associated with a higher likelihood of problematic behaviour. Furthermore, the results suggest that these correlations should be considered while taking gender differences into account.

*Keywords: Cyberbullying, social media use, social media addiction, primary school students.*

# FEAR IN POLITICAL COMMUNICATION: EMPHASIS ON FEAR OF UNKNOWN

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**Abstract**
Politics involves emotions (Redlawsk, 2006) and reasoning (Redlawsk & Pierce, 2017). The study of political communication campaigns generally follows two directions (Weber, 2007): emotional valence (positive and negative campaigns) and the impact of enthusiasm and fear. The modern founder of this latter direction is considered to be political psychologist and scholar Ted Brader. If the political communication process is filled with content and imagery associated with success and aimed at evoking enthusiasm, voter motivation to engage in the political process increases, reinforcing existing beliefs and making political decisions based on these beliefs—such as voting for a candidate. Conversely, if the political communication process is filled with content and imagery associated with fear, voter motivation increases to reconsider existing beliefs and encourage reassessment of their choices based on current evaluations. The analysis of threat perception is central to understanding Brader's findings. Moreover, the perception of threat can have both direct and indirect impacts on political behavior. The hypothesis of this paper suggests that negative emotions require more differentiation to have an indirect influence on political behavior as clear and distinct as direct influence: the likelihood of predicting political behavior through the political communication process will increase, and the political communication process will become more precise. Based on a qualitative content analysis of the Georgian Dream Party statements, this paper hypothesizes that if we do not limit our response to threats solely to fear (Brader & Marcus, 2013) but also consider the fear of unknown, we can better highlight the indirect influence on political participation and engagement, significantly narrowing the field of interpretation in the political communication process.

*Keywords: Political communication, fear, content analysis.*

# NEUROTICISM AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ANXIETY. THE MEDIATING ROLE OF CORE SELF-EVALUATION

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**Abstract**
Through a quantitative approach, this paper investigates the relationship between Neuroticism and Artificial Intelligence Anxiety and the mediating role of Core Self-Evaluation in this relationship. As AI technologies become deeply embedded in various sectors such as social media, smart devices, healthcare, and education, understanding how people perceive and interact with Artificial Intelligence is progressively essential. A total of 297 participants, consisting of 32 males and 165 females, completed surveys measuring their Neuroticism, Artificial Intelligence Anxiety, and Core Self-Evaluation levels. The data were collected via Google Forms using the following structured questionnaires: Neuroticism Scale, Artificial Intelligence Anxiety Scale, and Core Self-Evaluation Scale. Results showed significant positive correlations between Neuroticism and Artificial Intelligence anxiety (r=-.301, p<.01) suggesting that individuals with higher levels of AI anxiety are inclined towards adopting more skeptical viewpoints regarding AI technologies. Moreover, three of the four Artificial Intelligence anxiety subscales (job replacement, r=-.178, p<.05; sociotechnical blindness, r=-.208, p<.01, and Artificial Intelligence configuration, r=-.166, p<.05) also showed negative significant correlations with the attitudes toward AI. At the same time, Core Self-Evaluation showed significant negative correlations with the composite score of Artificial Intelligence anxiety (r=.304, p<.01) and all its subscales (learning, r=-.304, p<.01; job replacement, r=-.181, p<.05; sociotechnical blindness, r=-.236, p<.01, and Artificial Intelligence configuration, r=-.218, p<.01). Furthermore, Core Self-Evaluation was found to be a strong mediator between Neuroticism and Artificial Intelligence Anxiety. Understanding the role of AI anxiety and Core Self-Evaluation in shaping attitudes toward Artificial Intelligence can inform the development of strategies to mitigate negative perceptions and foster more positive attitudes toward Artificial Intelligence technologies.

*Keywords: Neuroticism, Artificial Intelligence, core self-evaluation, mediation.*

# PEDAGOGICAL STAFF MEMBERS PERSPECTIVE: CHANGE OF EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS OF SPECIAL SCHOOL STUDENTS

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**Abstract**
The goal of this study was to examine, from the perspective of pedagogical staff, the differences between emotional and behavioral problems of SEN students in one special school in Estonia in two timepoints – at the beginning and end of the school year. A sample of all SEN students (n = 51) in one special school was rated individually by their teachers (n = 12), assistant teachers (n = 12) and support specialist (n = 3) at two timepoints. For all the students, the three same members of the school pedagogical (one teacher, one assistant teacher, one support specialist who deal with students daily) staff completed the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire – Instructor Version. Research results indicated that special school students' emotional and behavioral problems – hyperactivity, emotional problems, conduct problems and peer problems, at the beginning of a school year were more frequent compared to the results at the end of the school year. Also, it was found that prosocial behavior was more prevalent among students in the special school at the end of the school year compared to the beginning of the study. Additionally, in terms of gender differences, the results of this study are in line with the other studies suggesting that boys were more likely to have higher behavioral problems scores and girls have a significantly greater level of prosocial behavior and emotional problems. The results of this pilot study extended research findings in this area identifying the improvement of behavioral functioning among special school students with intellectual disabilities during one full school year as assessed by pedagogical staff.

*Keywords: Emotional and behavioral problems, SDQ, special needs school.*

# EXPLORING NEW SPACE APPROPRIATION STRATEGIES IN FLEX-OFFICES: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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**Abstract**

Since the covid-19 pandemic, telework has developed and became the norm in companies worldwide. With people working from home several days per week, offices' occupation rates have plummeted, leaving open-spaces partly empty. Companies have seen this phenomenon as an opportunity to reduce costs by reducing the number of workstations per employee. As a result, workers in such setups do not own a specific desk. They rather belong to an area, in which several positions are available for them to use, but none of these can be considered "theirs". But it has been demonstrated that developing a feeling of appropriation or ownership over one's workspace through a range of processes (i.e., personalization) has a range of positive consequences such as improving work satisfaction (Rioux & Pignault, 2013) or reducing emotional exhaustion caused by lack of privacy (Laurence, Fried, & Slowik, 2013). However, although flex-offices are promptly developing, research about the impact of such design on appropriation and related issues are scarce. To address this topic, we conducted 17 semi-structured interviews, with workers from a French telecommunication company, some of whom had a personal desk and some of whom were in a flex-office. We interrogated their relationship to their own workspace and the ways they relate to it. We conducted a thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's guidelines (2006) to shed light on issues related to space appropriation. Our results show that a vast majority of individuals value their feeling of workplace belonging. Even when individual personalization is severely hindered, workers will express feeling like they belong to their workspace or are working towards developing this feeling. They will develop strategies and habits to develop a new feeling of appropriation through collective and individual processes (i.e., collective personalization, habits forming, team space regulation) more compatible with flex-offices. This study allows us to postulate that space appropriation goes beyond individual personalization and knowledge of the physical environment. When hindered, this complex and multifaceted psychological process can translate in many ways. This study points out the importance of letting employees turn their space into a place. It will be followed by quantitative research to further investigate these processes and their consequences in terms of behaviors and attitudes in the workplace.

*Keywords*: *Flex-desk, flex-office, workplace appropriation, workplace attachment.*

# AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON THE INTEGRATED MODEL OF FOLLOWERSHIP AND LEADERSHIP STYLES IN JAPAN

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**Abstract**

This study explores an integrated model of followership and leadership styles that functions optimally. Utilizing Kelley's (1992) model of followership and Hersey and Blanchard's (1982) situational leadership theory, Bjugstad et al. (2006) proposed a theoretical framework linking these constructs. However, empirical exploration remains limited in the literature. The analysis focused on variables such as demographic factors, affective commitment, followership, and leadership. Affective commitment was measured as a reflection of follower productivity, given its known impact on job performance. All proposed hypotheses were rejected, indicating that exemplary and conformist followership styles are associated with higher productivity, independent of leadership styles. Active followership enhances affective commitment among followers. Post-hoc analyses revealed that followership (active) and leadership (task behavior) positively influence affective commitment, while their combination with leadership (relationship behavior) yields negative effects. These findings highlight the complex dynamics between followership and leadership in promoting affective commitment within organizations.

*Keywords: Integrated model, followership, leadership, affective commitment.*

# BEING HIGHLY SENSITIVE AT WORK AND EXPERIENCING FLOW: RISK FACTOR OR RESOURCE AGAINST STRESS AND WORKAHOLISM?

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**Abstract**
Workaholism (Oates, 1971) is characterized by a compulsive tendency to work, sometimes to the detriment of health, personal relationships and other aspects of life (Burke, 2001). It is often associated with work-related stress (Spence & Robbins, 1992). Stress corresponds to a relationship between an individual and the work environment that is perceived as challenging or overwhelming personal resources, thus posing a threat to well-being (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In the workplace, high sensitivity is generally considered a risk factor for stress (Veleanovici et al., 2023) or burnout (Bordarie & Mourtialon, 2023). When faced with overly intense stimuli, highly sensitive people may tend to isolate themselves or invest in activities that they enjoy. At work, this investment can sometimes lead to a state of flow, where a person is so engrossed in an activity that they forget their surroundings (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). In this study, we focus on the effects of HSPS and flow on stress and workaholism. Our hypotheses are (1) all variables will be positively correlated, (2) HSPS will positively influence stress and workaholism, (3) workaholism will play a mediating role between HSPS and stress and (4) flow will positively influence the relationship between HSPS and other variables. The sample included 231 working adults, of whom 82.7% were women and 17.3% men. They were divided into 5 age groups: 33.3% between 18 and 24, 19.9% between 25 and 34, 16.5% between 35 and 44, 22.1% between 45 and 54 and 8.2% between 55 and 64. They anonymously completed an online questionnaire assessing sensitivity (HSPS-FR, 27 items, Bordarie et al., 2022), flow (FaW, 13 items, Crone et al., unpublished) and stress (PSS4, 4 items, Dupret & Bocéréan, 2013) and workaholism (WART, 25 items, Ravoux et al., 2018). Statistical analyses, including correlations, linear regressions and mediation models, were performed using JASP (version 0.18.3) and Jamovi (version 2.6.17.0). The results highlighted that the variables were positively correlated ($p<.01$), with the exception of flow, which was not correlated with HSPS, and perceived stress. HSPS had a positive effect on perceived stress ($\beta=.301$; $p<.001$) and workaholism ($\beta=.461$; $p<.001$). WART also had a positive effect on stress ($\beta=.260$; $p<.001$), playing a mediating role between HSPS and stress. Flow did not play a moderating role. We will discuss the results in relation to our hypotheses and in the light of the literature. We will point out the limitations of the study and suggest concrete ways in which organizations can optimize their working environments for the specific characteristics of employees.

*Keywords: Sensory processing sensitivity, workaholism, flow, stress, mediation.*

# BULLIES BESIDE EMPLOYERS: EXPLORATORY ANALYSES OF THE WORST BULLIES IN SOUTH KOREAN WORKPLACES

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**Abstract**
This study examines the characteristics of the worst bullies in South Korean workplaces to understand the nature and dynamic of workplace bullying. Analyzing the qualitative data collected from 377 participants between 2007 and 2023, the study found that, regardless of the time periods, "worst bullies" were typically senior management (60–70%) and male (60–80%), and aged 50 or older (over 60%). 70-80% had strong ties to business owners and were usually protected by the employers even when reported. Due to the employers' attitudes, only 7% of victims reported the bullying, with no cases resulting in appropriate resolution. Findings underscore power dynamics that protect worst bullies, perpetuating workplace bullying. Effective intervention requires employers' heightened awareness and active engagement in prevention.

*Keywords: Workplace bullying, worst bully, strategic bully, emotional bully, bully-employer relations.*

# NURTURING COEXISTENCE: ALGERIAN CHILDREN'S VISUAL NARRATIVES ON REFUGEE COMMUNITIES FROM EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY PERSPECTIVES

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**Abstract**

This paper explores how Algerian children perceive and experience their co-existence with refugee populations within their communities, drawing on social and educational psychology frameworks. Motivated by a need for more child-centred insight into refugee-host dynamics, particularly in developing contexts, this study illuminates the voices of young individuals often excluded from policy and academic debate. Employing participatory, arts-based methodology, we engaged 60 children (ages 5–7, 8–10 & 11+) in drawing, collaging, and focus group discussions. These methods offered a multifaceted window into how different age groups conceptualize co-existence. Younger participants emphasised gestures of friendship, shared religious identity, and inclusive play as catalysts for harmonious relationships. Older children and adolescents showed heightened sociopolitical awareness, referencing Algeria's colonial history, conflicts with neighbouring countries, and broader global solidarity. Both positive attitudes, grounded in empathy and hospitality and, persistent challenges, shaped by prejudices and misinformation emerged, reflecting the complex interplay of moral, cultural, and developmental factors. Findings underscore that co-existence is perceived as both a moral obligation, often grounded in religious and cultural norms, and a practical opportunity for community enrichment. Yet significant barriers persist, including social exclusion and unaddressed anxieties about health and safety. By highlighting how children's perspectives evolve with age and context, this study underscores the potential of educational initiatives rooted in educational psychology to foster tolerance, empathy, and inclusive attitudes at an early stage. The research also demonstrates how arts-based, child-focused approaches can yield nuanced understandings of co-existence in settings hosting large refugee populations. These insights are vital for educators, policymakers, and psychologists seeking to promote community cohesion and to design interventions that resonate with children's lived experiences and developmental needs.

*Keywords:* Coexistence, refugees, host communities, social psychology, arts-based methods.

# SELF-ESTEEM IN ADOLESCENTS: MEDIATOR OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SENSORY PROCESSING SENSITIVITY AND AFFECTIVE DEPENDENCE

**Alizée Richalley[1], Anaïs Seite[1], Amandine Deloustal[1], Caroline Giraudeau[1,2], & Jimmy Bordarie[1,3]**
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**Abstract**

High Sensory Processing Sensitivity (HSPS) (Aron & Aron, 1997) is an innate personality trait that affects approximately 30% of the population (Lionetti et al., 2018). It is characterized by more intense, complex and rapid cognitive processing of stimuli and heightened emotional reactivity than their peers (Gere et al., 2009). Highly sensitive adolescents are more reactive to stressful events (Burgard et al., 2022) and report lower socio-emotional well-being when faced with negative life events (Iimura, 2021). HSPS negatively predicts well-being, which is positively predicted by self-esteem (Orth & Robins, 2014). Self-esteem varies throughout an individual's life according to their positive or negative life experiences. In addition, individuals who are sensitive to sensory stimuli in general may be dependent in their peer relationships (Jerome & Liss, 2005). This study aims to investigate the influence of HSPS on self-esteem and affective dependence in adolescents, a critical developmental period characterized by significant physical, psychological, emotional and social changes. Our main hypotheses were (1) HSPS will negatively influence self-esteem and positively influence affective dependence; and (2) self-esteem will mediate the relationship between HSPS and affective dependence. The sample (n=100) consisted of 53% females and 47% males aged between 15 and 20 years. The mean age was 16.16 years old (SD=1.22) and 16% are in middle school and 87% in high school. They anonymously completed an online questionnaire assessing high sensory

processing sensitivity (HSPS-FR), self-esteem (RSE) and affective dependence (ADS-9). Correlations, linear regressions and a mediation analysis were performed using JASP (version 0.19.3). Results showed that HSPS negatively influenced self-esteem ($p<.001$) and positively influenced affective dependence ($p<.001$). Self-esteem negatively influenced affective dependence ($p<.001$). The mediation analysis revealed the mediating role of self-esteem between HSPS and affective dependence, explaining the negative influence of HSPS. HSPS appears to be a vulnerability factor in the development of both self-esteem (Liss et al., 2005) and affective dependence (Jerome & Liss, 2005). However, self-esteem was a protective factor against affective dependence. Therefore, it would be interesting to investigate how highly sensitive people could increase their self-esteem. Limitations of the study (such as sample size and appropriateness of instruments for adolescents) are discussed. Suggestions and avenues for future research are also suggested.

*Keywords: High sensory processing sensitivity, self-esteem, affective dependence, adolescents, mediation.*

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# UNRAVELLING THE ROLE OF SOCIO-PROFESSIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS IN SHAPING IDENTIFICATION WITH THE FRENCH CIVIL SERVICE

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**Abstract**
For several decades, public sector employees in France have faced profound reforms driven by the emergence of New Public Management (i.e., NPM), in the 1980s across Western countries, and the paradigms it introduced (Bezes & Musselin, 2015; Pollitt et al., 2007; Reiter & Klenk, 2019). The implementation of these managerial doctrines and practices has been linked in the literature to various negative effects on employees' health, attitudes, and behaviors (e.g., Abord de Chatillon & Desmarais, 2012; Rivière et al., 2019) and raises questions about a loss of bearings and meaning at work (Dussuet et al., 2017; Emery & Giauque, 2012). Specifically, according to some authors, the dichotomy between these market-inspired practices and values and the traditional ethos of public servants has led to a hybridization of institutional culture (Emery & Giauque, 2014). This transformation raises questions about the identity positioning of public sector employees. While identification has already been studied in the public sector, particularly through the lens of identification with work groups or organizations, no research has to date specifically examined identification with the public service as an institution. Yet, its broader scope, compared to organizational focus, calls for an additional specific quantification of this form of identification in a context as vast and complex as the French civil service. Moreover, the French civil service presents a distinct work context, shaped by a unique system of representations and values (Hondeghem & Vandenabeele, 2005; Rouban, 2009). Despite this distinctiveness, the relationship that public servants maintain with the institution (i.e., French public service) remains largely underexplored. Therefore, this study aims to explore this relationship between public servants and the French public service by examining the socio-professional and organizational characteristics likely to influence these connections in differentiated ways. Data were collected from a sample of 676 public servants from various French public contexts. Descriptive, correlational, and mean comparison analyses were conducted. The results demonstrate that several of these determinants are significantly associated with the level of identification with the public service, suggesting differentiated levels of identification based on employee typologies. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the relationships that French public servants maintain with their institution, while also highlighting differences that may exist between various categories of employees and public organizations.

*Keywords: French public service, identification, socio-professional determinants, organizational characteristics, public servants.*

# AGE DISCRIMINATION AND FEAR OF BEING LEFT BEHIND AT WORK

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**Abstract**
It is widely known that ageism causes numerous negative effects. It leads to discrimination of employees expressed as unequal treatment, isolation, rejection and related forms of negative behavior at work, based on their age. Fear of missing out (FoMO) at work is defined as a persistent fear that an employee will miss out on important business opportunities compared to others. We wanted to explore whether age discrimination affects the FoMO at work and is there a role (moderator/mediator) of resiliency in that relationship. Results are based on an online survey of 211 employees from Montenegro, from private and public sectors. Survey included Workplace Age Discrimination Scale (WADS, 9 items, 5-point frequency scale, Cronbach's alpha 0.93), Workplace FoMO Scale (10 items, 5-point Likert scale, Cronbach's alpha 0,95), Employee Resilience Scale (9 items, 5-point frequency scale, Cronbach's 0.95) and set of questions about the employee and organization. It was found that younger employees (age group 18-25 years) felt being more discriminated against than their older colleagues did ($F(3, 207) = 7.010$, $p < .001$). In addition, less experienced employees were more discriminated against than those with more experience at work were ($r = -.22$, $p < .001$). There were no differences in discrimination based on gender and income. Employees' experience of being discriminated against at work was related to their fear of missing out ($r = .198$, $p < .004$). Resilience at work was unrelated both with discrimination and with fear of missing out at work. Main finding about the relationship of discrimination and fear of being left behind at work highlights a key negative effect of ageism and age discrimination. Finding that younger people feel more discriminated at work could be explained by the fact that Montenegro is a high-power distance country (based on Hofstede's research), where the social status and respect are gained by age. Research indicates cross-cultural validity of the workplace FoMO.

*Keywords: Ageism, fear of missing out at work, Montenegro.*

# KAZAKH YOUTH AND THE SHIFTING LANDSCAPE OF IDENTITY IN POST-SOVIET TIMES

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**Abstract**
The identity of Kazakhstan has changed considerably since 1991 when the Soviet Union collapsed, with the youth increasingly taking up conservative Islam for self-definition. Religious and cultural expressions were stifled under the Soviet Union due to the imposition of atheism coupled with Russification, leading to a broken sense of national identity (Khalid, 2007). Nonetheless, there is a rising revival of Islam in post-Soviet Union Kazakhs who claim to seek meaning and belonging in more conservative religious practices. This change is caused by an abandoning of secularism from Soviet times, coupled with curiosity to find authenticity in globalization (Louw, 2010). The revival of Islam in young Kazakhs is also a sign of the impact of various global religious movements and transnational networks that have been spearheading a more rigorous doctrine of Islam (Schatz, 2004). These movements tend to provide distinct cultural boundaries and a prearranged moral system at a time when town-dweller Kazakhs are slowly losing their cultural pride in nomadic clan identities. Moreover, instabilities in the economy and politics have created a demand for a certain ideologic stance, which conservative Islam seems to fulfill. However, this identity shift is not without tensions, as it challenges Kazakhstan's officially secular governance and sparks debates over national identity. This study examines the evolving self-identification of Kazakh youth in relation to Islam, exploring the socio-political and historical factors contributing to this transformation. Understanding this phenomenon is crucial for assessing the future of Kazakh national identity and its implications for regional stability. Recent posts and comments on social media were analyzed. The initial results of the analysis were that Kazakh youths and young adults had increasingly conflicting identity issues that were between the Kazakh culture and a more conservative view of Islam.

*Keywords: Kazakh identity, youth, conservative Islam, post-Soviet, religious revival.*

# INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANISATIONAL RESILIENCE: EFFECTS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL AND PERCEIVED ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT

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**Abstract**
Organizational resilience (OR) refers to an organization's ability to anticipate, prepare for, respond to and adapt to sudden changes or shocks (Bernard and Bhamra, 2011). It is the result of strategic and operational logic (Ismail et al., 2011) and resources. Among individual resources, psychological capital (PsyCap) corresponds to an individual's state of positive psychological development. It is characterized by: (1) the perceived ability and the necessary effort to succeed in difficult tasks (self-efficacy); (2) a positive attitude towards success (optimism); (3) persistence and the ability to redirect strategies towards success (hope); and (4) the ability to overcome difficulties and problems in order to succeed (resilience) (Luthans et al., 2007). Among organizational resources, we are interested in perceived organizational support (POS) which is defined as employees' perceptions of the importance that the organization attaches to the well-being of its employees and the recognition of their contributions (Eisenberger et al., 1986). In this study, we focus on the impact of these individual (PsyCap) and organizational (POS) resources on job satisfaction (Locke, 1976). Our hypotheses are (1) that all variables will be positively correlated, (2) that PsyCap and POS will positively influence satisfaction and (3) that PsyCap will play a mediating role between POS and satisfaction. The study included 252 working adults, 192 of whom were military trainee pilots from the Air Force and Space Force. Of the 252, 33% (n=82) were aged 18-24, 57% (n=143) were aged 25-34 and 10% were aged 35 and over. They anonymously completed an online questionnaire assessing PsyCap (French Psychological Capital Questionnaire, 24 items, Choisay et al., 2021), POS (9 items, Tungisa and Pohl, 2020) and job satisfaction (1 item, Tavani et al., 2014). Correlations, linear regressions and a mediation analysis will be performed using JASP (version 0.18.3). Results showed that both POS and PsyCap positively influenced job satisfaction ($p<.001$). The mediation analysis revealed the mediating role of PsyCap between POS and job satisfaction. We will discuss the results in the light of the literature. We will set out the limitations of the study and propose concrete courses of action for organizations to enable them to optimize their organizational resilience.

***Keywords:*** *Organizational resilience, psychological capital, perceived organizational support, job satisfaction, mediation model.*

# LEGAL PSYCHOLOGY

## VIOLENCE IN HEALTHCARE SETTINGS: EXPLORING HEALTHCARE WORKERS' EXPERIENCES AND STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTION

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**Abstract**

Violence in healthcare settings is a serious issue that has been on the rise globally in recent years. Violence and hostility against healthcare workers are common, which can cause physical and mental health problems for those who are impacted. Additionally, such incidents seriously affect patients and may lower the quality of care and treatment, deteriorating the working environment. Examining the experiences of healthcare professionals is crucial to creating effective policies to stop violence and handle it when it occurs. For this purpose, the current study explored the aggression and violence against healthcare workers in healthcare settings and their prevention strategies. Semi-structured interviews with eight healthcare workers aged 26 to 44 years were conducted. The collected data was analyzed using the thematic analysis method via the MAXQDA software program. Three themes were identified: the scars of violence, combating violence and seeking security and support in healthcare, along with their subthemes. The findings highlighted that healthcare workers were seriously impacted following incidents of violence. Although they normalize that type of incident, generally, they are psychologically traumatized and tend to resign from their job or migrate to Western countries. Also, they demand legal support and preventative measures while working in the hospital. Thus, to prevent violence and mitigate its effects, it is necessary to enhance security measures, implement psychological support programs, organize awareness training, improve the white code system for reporting violence, and enforce legal regulations more effectively.

*Keywords: Healthcare workers, preventive measures, security, violence.*

## BEING TRAUMA INFORMED AND CONSIDERED WHEN RESPONDING TO VICTIMS OF VIOLENT CRIME AND DISASTERS

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**Abstract**

Since 2020, New South Wales, Australia came out of an eight-year drought and experienced the worst summer bushfires in 2019/20. This was quickly followed by the worldwide pandemic with international and national border closures and restrictions throughout 2020 and 2021. Then in 2022, devastating floods and storms made international headlines. Throughout this period, countless bio-security disasters affected agriculture as well as land and water farming included. The public and private sectors along with the not-for profit organisations were pushed beyond the capabilities to support victims of these disasters. Mental health was continuously front and centre and yet policy and response did not adequately meet the needs and expectations. Policy and response delivered what was thought was needed by the community and the community were not being listened to what they wanted. Working in each of these disasters, there were several considerations that were continually not being factored in planning: a) How to respond to disasters wholistically as opposed to individually. b) How to effectively engage with the communities, businesses, and leaders to actively listen to their needs, wants and expectations. c) How to prepare the communities for the next disaster so that their mental health as well as their properties are resilient. d) Communities who had been resilient who were now at survival stage, providing the right level of support. e) What individual circumstances need to further be factored when responding to disaster trauma, for example, domestic and family violence, sexual assault, homelessness and socio-economic considerations, mental illness, and cognitive impairments as well as disabilities. Looking at the practical application of policy, programs and initiatives and key lessons from each of these disasters, the session will present how being trauma informed is not one dimensional. For example, during COVID-19 border closures and restrictions, victims of domestic and family violence were impeded from escaping. While the 2022 floods affected communities

that are significantly disadvantaged socio-economically, hence the reason many bought within floodplains became homeless and the recovery program purchased remaining homes that were shown to place people at significant risk contributing greater to the home shortage and homelessness issue. This session will take a broader look at trauma, considering its multi-dimensional impacts not only from violence, but as an added factor to disaster trauma, emergency management planning, policy and initiatives.

*Keywords: Trauma informed, disasters, violence, policy.*

# COGNITIVE AND EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

## CAUSALITY AND ONTOLOGICAL HIERARCHY IN THOMAS AQUINAS: FROM DIVINE DEPENDENCE TO HUMAN AUTONOMY

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**Abstract**

This article explores Thomas Aquinas' concept of causality, as well as his rejection of Democritus' materialist view — which proposes a linear and mechanical chain of events. Aquinas' proposal of a hierarchical causality, where all secondary causes depend on the First Cause or God, is also exposed. For Aquinas, causality is not a blind sequence of events, but a dynamic network of ordered interactions. Each being acts within an ontological hierarchy, where there is a first cause that continually sustains the order and existence of the universe. Aquinas distinguishes various degrees of causal autonomy among beings. A stone, with purely passive causality, responds to external forces according to the laws of physics, while an animal, such as a cat, exhibits greater autonomy, guided by its soul that gives it a center of action. The cat's behavior is more unpredictable than that of the stone, since it is determined by its intrinsic nature. At the top of this hierarchy is the human being. Endowed with reason and will, the human being represents the highest expression of causal autonomy among composite beings. Humans do not act solely by instinct, but have the capacity to deliberate on good and evil and shape their lives based on freely chosen values. This freedom is not absolute, since the human, as a secondary cause, also acts under the design of the First Cause and consciously collaborates with the divine purpose. Causality in Thomas Aquinas is therefore more than a natural explanation of events; it is an ontological relationship that unites all beings with the divine order, with God as the First Cause and source of all being and movement. Humans uniquely integrate matter and spirit in the cosmos and possess a rational and moral capacity that distinguishes them from other living beings. This autonomy allows them to consciously participate in the divine plan and transcend material causality, a view that can be enriched by quantum superposition, which suggests that a being's potential (or capacity to be) is actualized by form, analogous to the actualization process that occurs in the universe according to divine order. Finally, Thomistic philosophy differs from pantheism in asserting that the universe, although unified, does not have an intrinsic self-sufficient purpose, since it depends on the creative will of God. There is an ontological distinction between Creator and creation.

*Keywords:* Causality, Aquinas, autonomy, finality, superposition.

## THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL STRUCTURE OF OBJECT IMAGERY ABILITY: COLOR, TEXTURE AND SHAPE VISUALIZATION

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**Abstract**

Neuroscience research shows that visual imagery consists of two distinct types, object and spatial, each supported by different neural pathways and cognitive processes. Object imagery, which relies on the ventral stream of the brain, refers to the mental visualization of objects based on visual properties such as color, shape, and texture, playing a critical role in artistic performance. In contrast, spatial imagery, supported by the dorsal stream, involves visualizing spatial relationships between objects or their parts and is essential for wayfinding and success in STEM disciplines. While spatial imagery ability, including its subcomponents (speeded rotation, spatial visualization) and its relevance to cognitive processes, have been extensively studied, object imagery ability remains an underdeveloped area of research. Existing tools for assessing object imagery ability primarily rely on self-reports of subjective vividness, with limited investigation into its distinct subcomponents. Guided by neuroscience evidence that different aspects of object information, such as color, texture, and shape, are processed in distinct regions of the ventral stream,

the current research aimed to investigate whether object imagery ability can be subdivided into specific sub-abilities (e.g., imagining color, shape, or texture) and to examine how these sub-abilities are applied in real-world contexts. In Experiment 1, we assessed 572 secondary school students from two typical schools in Singapore (ages 13–16) and 30 Singaporean university students. Participants completed a battery of tasks assessing spatial imagery (mental rotation) and object imagery (color, texture, and shape). The analyses, using structural equation modeling, demonstrated that object and spatial imagery abilities are distinct and independent. Object imagery sub-abilities (color, texture, and shape visualization) emerged as distinct but correlated cognitive domains. In addition, developmental trajectories for the secondary school participants indicated significant differences in the maturation of color, shape, and texture visualization. In Study 2, we examined the performance of 498 students from the Rome University of Fine Arts, spanning 14 artistic specializations. Assessments of color, texture, and shape visualization revealed distinct object imagery ability profiles across artistic disciplines. Students specializing in Cinema and Sculpture showed strong proficiency in shape imagery, while those in Visual and Innovation Design excelled in texture-related tasks. Students in Computer Animation demonstrated the highest proficiency in color visualization. Overall, the results demonstrate the importance of recognizing object imagery as a multidimensional construct comprising distinct sub-abilities—color, texture, and shape visualization, providing a foundation for further research into the neural and cognitive mechanisms underlying object imagery abilities.

*Keywords: Object imagery, individual differences, cognitive development.*

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# HUMAN INTELLECT VS. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: A THOMISTIC PERSPECTIVE ON COGNITION, UNITY AND QUANTUM POTENTIALITY

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**Abstract**
In the Thomist view, human knowledge far surpasses the capacity of any machine. Unlike artificial intelligence (AI) and cameras, that merely capture and process data, the human intellect interprets, organizes, and assigns deep meaning to sensory experiences. Thomas Aquinas emphasizes two essential faculties in this process: the senses, which collect data, and the intellect, which transcends the physical to understand the essence of things. AI follows algorithms, but the human mind is capable of abstract reasoning and discovering metaphysical truths. Thomas Aquinas distinguishes intrinsic and extrinsic unity, in a philosophy that moves away from reductionism (understood as radical materialism). Intrinsic unity — essential to the identity of a being — exists within itself, while extrinsic unity depends on external relations. Thomas Aquinas criticizes Democritus' atomism and emphasizes that the essence of a being cannot be reduced to its material parts. Intrinsic unity is fundamental to the existence and function of a living being (particularly humans), who act as cohesive wholes — form and function are inextricably linked to their essence. Artificial objects do not have an intrinsic unity. Machines can record sensitive data such as colors and shapes, but they cannot discern the meaning and essence of things. True human cognition goes beyond data manipulation; interprets universals, categories and transcendental truths. For Aquinas, human intelligence, as an immaterial faculty, discerns deeper meanings such as beauty and existential meaning; transforms sensitive data into meaningful concepts — a process beyond the reach of machines. Even in its most advanced forms, AI cannot comprehend essences, reflect on universals, or experience self-awareness. AI can simulate intelligence, but it does not have the depth of human cognition, which, for Aquinas, is linked to divine reality. The Thomistic view challenges reductionist views of human intelligence; highlights the uniqueness and complexity of human consciousness. This distinction is relevant in psychology, which seeks to understand cognition, consciousness and being. Psychology benefits from philosophical reflection on human capacities, especially with regard to the role of the intellect and the soul in the perception of reality. In this context, quantum superposition can be interpreted as Aristotelian potentiality. In quantum mechanics (QM), superposition allows particles to exist in multiple states until they are observed. This recalls Aristotle's notion of potentiality as an unrealized capacity. The measurement cancels the superposition, and updates a state of many potentials. This interpretation unites modern physics with classical metaphysics and aligns quantum indeterminacy with Aristotelian principles.

*Keywords: Cognition, intelligence, consciousness, abstraction, metaphysics.*

# HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY

## PSYCHOLOGICAL INOCULATION MESSAGES AS A STRATEGY FOR ENHANCING ROAD SAFETY

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**Abstract**
Road traffic accidents are among the leading causes of death worldwide and past studies have shown that safety education has little effects on driving behavior. One alternative is psychological inoculation (PI) which addresses drivers' cognitive and social biases which underlie dangerous driving. The current study examined the impact of prerecorded PI messages on driver behavior using a driving simulator (STISIM Drive). PI is a cognitive technique designed to challenge and reshape cognitive distortions while fostering social resistance skills. In PI, we expose people to challenging sentences that reflect their biases or social pressures, which they then systematically refute. In this study, we compared two types of prerecorded road safety messages: newly developed PI messages and traditional educational messages, commonly used in mass media road safety campaigns. Forty participants were randomly assigned to one of two groups – PI or educational messages. Initially, participants completed a driving scenario containing several preplanned critical events to establish baseline driving behavior. Following this, the relevant prerecorded messages were played, with each participant receiving the messages corresponding their assigned condition. Immediately after, participants drove in a second, similar driving scenario. The order of the two scenarios was counterbalanced across participants. Results indicated that, compared to the educational messages, which had no significant effect on driving behavior, the PI messages significantly improved several key driving measures. These improvements included a reduction in speeding time, fewer total crashes, and a lower ratio of crashes to critical events. Additionally, PI nearly significantly reduced the distance the vehicle traveled between the onset of a critical event and the participant's reaction, a measure that accounts for both reaction time and driving speed. On the other hand, it was also found that PI may have had a negative effect in traffic jam conditions: Participants exposed to PI tended to drive faster and to exhibit greater speed variability during traffic jams post-treatment. These findings suggest that PI messages are generally more effective than traditional educational messages in improving driver behavior. However, it is important to carefully assess the content of these messages to ensure they are appropriately targeted and applied. Pending replication in real life driving, this could be an additional implications for global road traffic accident reduction.

*Keywords: Psychological inoculation messages, educational messages, drivers behavior, driving simulator study.*

## MULTIDIMENSIONAL SCALE OF SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING FOR EMPLOYED PERSONS: THEORETICAL MODEL AND STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

**Evija Nagle[1], Iluta Skrūzkalne[1], Silva Seņkāne[1], Olga Rajevska[1], Ingūna Griškēviča[1], Andrejs Ivanovs[1], & Ieva Reine[1,2]**
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**Abstract**
The lack of theoretical models and comprehensive scientific tools to study employees' subjective well-being (SWB) has attracted much scientific attention. Therefore, there is a need for a multidimensional approach capable of measuring SWB at different levels in a reliable and standardized manner. This study aims to develop a theoretically valid and psychometrically tested Multidimensional Scale of Subjective Well-being for Employed Persons (MSWEP). *Methods:* The MSWEP was developed based on the conceptual model frameworks of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD),

the World Health Organization (WHO), and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) for well-being research. 4 organizations agreed to participate in the study: administration and services, healthcare, pharmaceutical, and energy sectors. 200 online surveys were sent to personalized emails provided by the organizations. Principal component analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation was used to determine the factor structure. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) indicator was used to determine the sample size. Bartlett's test of sphericity assessed the correlation between variables. To test the psychometric properties of the scale, internal consistency scores (Cronbach's alpha and MacDonald's omega coefficient), difficulty, and discrimination index were calculated. *Results:* The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO = 0.908). Bartlett's test showed a strong and statistically significant correlation ($x^2$ = 19479.18, $p < 0.001$). The weight factor on the respective scale was $\geq |0.40|$. The eigenvalue threshold for including items in the model was >1. After the PCA with 48 items, three items that did not fit into any factor structure were excluded from MSWEP. The final MSWEP consists of 45 items, grouped based on PCA results into 10 MSWEP determinants: subjective well-being, inclusion, social support, psychosocial risk, work intensity, psychosomatics, career development, health risks, financial security, and autonomy. The total variance explained by all factors is 62.39%. Cronbach's alpha indicated high internal consistency in 7 scales (0.797–0.925) and insufficient internal consistency in 3 scales (0.624–0.691). The difficulty index showed high values on three scales (5.05–5.69) and low values on one scale (1.57–1.74). The discrimination index scores comply with accepted scientific norms. *Conclusions:* This research led to the development of the MSWEP, a reliable and valid instrument for assessing the subjective well-being of employees. The final version consists of 45 items grouped into ten theoretically based factors, providing a comprehensive assessment of occupational well-being. However, insufficient internal consistency was found for some scales, such as psychosocial risk (0.691), psychosomatic (0.671), and financial security (0.624). At the same time, high difficulty index values were found for social support and job insecurity (5.40-5.69), while lower values were observed for psychosomatic health (1.57-1.74). These shortcomings point to the need to refine or delete individual items to improve the accuracy and internal consistency of the instrument. Further studies with larger samples are needed to fully validate the suitability of the MSWEP for different domains and cultures.

*Keywords: Subjective well-being, employed person, questionnaire, scale development, item analysis.*

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# SELF-COMPASSION AND HEALTH-RELATED OUTCOMES: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF PERCEIVED STRESS

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**Abstract**
A growing body of research has suggested that self-compassion is associated with better mental health. Recently, it has been demonstrated to also be associated with health-related outcomes. The aim of the current study was to test the mediating role of perceived stress in the relationship between self-compassion and physical health. A total of 489 participants (49%; male, 51% female; M age=40.48, SD=11.95) completed an online composite questionnaire that included: Demographic information, self-compassion, perceived stress, physical symptoms, and self-rated health scales. The results showed that perceived stress fully mediated the relationship between self-compassion and physical symptoms. Furthermore, perceived stress partially mediated the relationship between self-compassion and self-rated health. The results further elaborate previous findings with regard to the predictive role of self-compassion on health-related outcomes via perceived stress. Given the predictive role of physical symptoms and self-rated health on future health outcomes and mortality, the current findings have important implications for establishing intervention as well as prevention programs.

*Keywords: Self-compassion, perceived stress, self-rated health, physical symptoms.*

# THE IMPACT OF QUANTUM BIOFEEDBACK IN REDUCING STRESS-RELATED ANXIETY AND PROMOTING NEUROPLASTICITY: AN INVESTIGATIVE REVIEW

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**Abstract**

Stress-induced anxiety can be debilitating and high-intensity experience, and biofeedback as an intervention tool has gained recognition as a promising method for managing stress-related anxiety by enhancing individuals' ability to regulate physiological responses and creating a path to homeostasis (Alneyadi et al., 2021). Recent global reports of increasing anxiety with a high intensity affecting a person's physical, emotional, and cognitive symptoms, alongside experiences of nervousness and distorted negative thoughts (American Psychiatric Association, n.d.; Sareen, et al. 2005), call for a holistic approach to treatment plans. Although traditional biofeedback is valid and reliable in its application and interventions, it still lacks a holistic perspective. This systematic review explores the viability of quantum biofeedback in its superiority over traditional methods for managing stress-related anxiety and its capacity to engage neural pathways in achieving plasticity through neural coding (encoding and decoding). The authors will examine the existing evidence to demonstrate quantum biofeedback's ability to provide patients with a holistic, comprehensive self-management strategy for reducing stress-induced anxiety while addressing interconnected physiological systems. Quantum biofeedback can be crucial in fostering neuroplasticity by simultaneously inducing and stimulating neural coding. By altering physiological responses to internal or external sensory stimuli, quantum biofeedback reorganizes and reshapes the structures, functions, or connections related to stress and anxiety, helping to form new connections and neural pathways. This potential exceeds that of traditional biofeedback methods, which is exciting and reflects the promising future of quantum biofeedback and the necessity for further research and validation.

*Keywords: Stress-induced anxiety, quantum biofeedback, neuroplasticity, anxiety reduction.*

# PERSONALITY PROFILES WITH FIVE FACTOR MODEL IN IMPULSE CONTROL AND GENDER GROUPS

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**Abstract**

Impulsivity as a symptom may reflect a number of psychiatric disorders and studies have shown that it associated with like violent crimes, aggressivity and etc. Also studies show that men tend to be more impulsive behavior than women. However, there is less study about gender-related in non-clinical populations in impulse control. The aim of this study was to examine personality profile with Five Factor Model in order to in a sample of non-clinical genders groups. Participants (n = 1766, male %49.4, female %50.6, age M = 26.35, s = 10.97) completed lexically-based adjective checklist of impulsiveness scale and bipolar markers for the Five Factor Model. First, two groups were determined as below and above average using the impulsivity scale score. Then, these two groups and gender groups were compared with two-way variance analysis in terms of five-factor personality score. According to the results, there is difference in the five-factor (Extroversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability and Intellect) score of the low and high impulsivity groups. The personality scores of the high impulsivity group are at a lower level. Male and female groups in low and high impulsivity groups have similar results in five personality factor scores. In addition, there is no interaction between impulsivity groups and gender groups in the five factor score. On the basis of this result, it was concluded that there are no differences in the personality traits of male and female groups in low and high impulsivity groups, but there were differences in the personality traits of low and high impulsivity groups.

*Keywords: Impulsivity, personality, gender, five factor model.*

# PSYCHOANALYSIS AND PSYCHOANALYTICAL PSYCHOTHERAPY

## CLINIC, POLITICS AND COMMITMENT: HÉLIO PELLEGRINO AND THE SUBVERSION OF SILENCE

**João Batista Lembi Ferreira**
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**Abstract**
This paper explores the trajectory of Hélio Pellegrino, highlighting his active engagement in the fight against authoritarianism and the military dictatorship in Brazil, as well as his courage in challenging rigid institutions. Hélio Pellegrino embodied the synthesis of the intellectual committed to social transformation, integrating psychoanalysis with public and political engagement in times of coups, silencing, censorship, and the torture of political prisoners. His combative stance extended not only to the institutional practices of traditional psychoanalysis but also to the public confrontation of ethical issues, as in the case of the self-proclaimed "psychoanalyst" Amílcar Lobo, a collaborator in acts of torture. In this emblematic case, Pellegrino exposed the contradiction between the clinical commitment to human care and involvement in acts of torture. This denunciation transcends the Brazilian context and reveals the ongoing tension between psychoanalysis and authoritarianism in Europe and globally, standing out as a particular episode within a broader historical framework of international psychoanalytic institutions. His intense participation in spaces of resistance, such as the Symposium "Psychoanalysis and Politics" at PUC-Rio, is recalled as a moment when he confronted the dilemmas of analytical neutrality in dark times. Beyond being a psychoanalyst, Hélio was also a poet, journalist, physician, and psychiatrist—a defender of a living clinic open to the people, opposing the confinement of knowledge. He believed in psychoanalysis as a subversive and transformative practice, open to human encounters and historical processes. The first social psychoanalysis clinic in Brazil was born from his restlessness. Together with Kattrin Kemper, whose experience at the Berlin Polyclinic inspired a commitment to democratizing psychoanalysis, he proposed a model aimed at the working classes, breaking with the elitism of traditional consulting rooms. There, in Morro dos Cabritos and the streets of Copacabana, psychoanalysis assumed another face, one close to the suffering of the people. His trajectory reconstructs the struggle for ethics in psychoanalysis, transforming the consulting room into a space of human encounter that transcends the mere application of psychoanalytic technique—a gesture of presence in the face of the other's suffering, capable of opening unexpected paths to freedom. This study revisits this restless and luminous figure, reaffirming the relevance of his courageous trajectory, his intellectual contributions, and his clinical and political psychoanalytic praxis.

***Keywords:*** *Hélio Pellegrino, international Freudianism, international authoritarianism and dictatorships, social clinic, ethical commitment.*

## BEHAVIOR IS MEMORY: TEMPLATE THEORY, A NEW DIRECTION IN PSYCHODYNAMIC PSYCHOTHERAPY

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**Abstract**
Repeated caregiver responses in childhood get laid down in the child as automatic presumptions about relatedness, an internalized function I call the relational template. In future, interactive behavior can activate that established relational template, with its automatic behaviors becoming manifest. Relational templates originate in repeated relational events that are 1) directly experienced, 2) observed, or 3) fantasized (in opposition to traumatic interactions). The therapist can become aware of an activated relational template through observing the automatic relational 1) behavior, 2) expectancies and 3) premises a patient exhibit in the consultation room. That which is not remembered explicitly can be shown through such reflexive behavior, often outside of one's own awareness. This is how behavior is memory.

***Keywords:*** *Relational, template, procedural, memory, behavior.*

# IMPLICATIONS OF LINGUISTIC IDENTITY FOR THE PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC PROCESS

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**Abstract**
While our globalized world has increased the prevalence of multilingual patients and therapists, multilingualism seems to be a topic that remains unspoken in psychotherapy training programs as well as in institutions that provide psychotherapy to the wider community. The lack of awareness about the specificities of the multilingual experience can cause therapists to misunderstand their patients' emotional functioning and to misdiagnose them. This paper aims to offer a psychoanalytically informed framework that helps us understand how language is at the core of the individual's identity – a complex structure of stable and fluid/mutable elements which mediates the interaction between external and internal worlds. It also aims to address the implications of multilingualism for psychotherapeutic practice, by using clinical material from psychotherapy sessions with monolingual and bilingual patients. This paper delves into the particularities of the subjective experience of people who make sense of themselves and the world in more than one language, and argues that an awareness of the linguistic characteristics of each patient promotes better psychotherapeutic practice, whether conducted by monolingual or multilingual therapists. The paper then extends this exploration to monolingual therapeutic dyads, emphasizing that even in such dyads, there may be "different languages" being spoken, as the same words can have distinct emotional connotations depending on each person's lived experience. The paper concludes that the therapist's evaluation of the patient's language profile is of the utmost importance in any psychotherapy process, given the implications of this aspect of the person's identity in their sense of self and their mode of being in the world.

*Keywords: Language, multilingualism, identity, psychoanalytic psychotherapy.*

# OEDIPUS COMPLEX, OEDIPAL PACT AND SOCIAL PACT: THE INSURRECTION OF OEDIPUS IN HÉLIO PELLEGRINO

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**Abstract**
This article addresses the thought of Hélio Pellegrino, highlighting his singular contribution to psychoanalysis through the development of a critical and innovative reflection on the *oedipus complex*, the *oedipal pact*, and the *social pact*. Pellegrino — psychoanalyst, poet, and essayist — is among the most prominent figures of twentieth-century Brazilian psychoanalysis and belongs to the fourth generation of the international psychoanalytic movement. His trajectory was marked by a commitment to the democratisation of access to psychoanalysis and the struggle against social injustice. The articulation between psychoanalysis and the Brazilian historical context underpins his critique of authoritarian institutions, revealing the ethical dimension of his clinical practice. The concept of the oedipal pact, as formulated by Pellegrino, reflects the structuring function of the Law, emphasising reciprocity and equality as foundational to the civilising process. Throughout the text, the author analyses how this perspective contributes to the understanding of the structuration of human desire, processes of subjectivation, and the formation of both psychic and social symptoms, positioning itself as a critique of the traditional psychiatric model and the conservatism prevalent within psychoanalytic institutions. Hélio Pellegrino is recognised among the key figures of Brazilian psychoanalysis and is one of the few Brazilian psychoanalysts with a dedicated entry in the *Dictionnaire de la psychanalyse* by Élisabeth Roudinesco and Michel Plon. Moreover, his essay *Complexo de Édipo, Pacto Edípico e Pacto Social* is catalogued in the Sigmund Freud Library in London, translated into English as *Oedipus Complex, Oedipal Pact, and Social Pact*. This fact reaffirms Pellegrino's international relevance, establishing him as a reference not only within the Brazilian context but also on the global psychoanalytic stage. The inclusion of his work in the Freud Library collection symbolises the recognition of his theoretical contributions to psychoanalysis, especially concerning the articulation between psyche, culture, and social institutions.

*Keywords: Hélio Pellegrino, Oedipus Complex, oedipal pact, social pact, Brazilian psychoanalysis.*

# INTEGRATING FREUDIAN, RELATIONAL/INTERPERSONAL PSYCHOANALYTIC AND NEUROSCIENCE CONCEPTS OF UNCONSCIOUS PROCESSES: DISSOCIATION, NOT REPRESSION

**Rebecca C. Curtis**
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**Abstract**
Until the "cognitive revolution" in psychology, psychologists and psychoanalysts had different models of the mind. Not only were unconscious processes unimportant to behavioral psychologists, conscious processes were not important as well. Once the "cognitive revolution" took place in psychology, conscious processes, and eventually unconscious processes, were believed to be crucial again to understanding human behavior. The experiences that are unconscious in contemporary cognitive psychology are not, however, experiences that people appear motivated to keep out of awareness. They are experiences that are simply not activated by current situations. The psychoanalytic unconscious has continued to represent experiences that either do not reach awareness or get pushed out of awareness—in other words threatening experiences of which there is motivation to remain unaware to maintain the functioning of the meaning system—what Freud called "repression". Knowledge that neural networks are activated by incoming experiences, especially those related to physical and psychological survival, and that the organization of experiences takes place on an ongoing basis, can unify psychology and psychoanalysis in their understanding of these processes. Psychoanalysts can now join mainstream neuroscience and scientific psychology by laying the term "repression" to rest and thinking instead in terms of "motivated forgetting" and of threatening experiences as sometimes "dissociated." It is useful, however, to conceptualize unconscious processes not only as repressed, dissociated, or "adaptive" (or maladaptive), but as a cauldron of generative experiences. Turning to a patient Andreas, it is noteworthy that his insight into the origin of his "dead" feelings did not eliminate the compulsive sexuality that bothered him so deeply. He required learning other ways of handling feelings, not only an awareness of the origins of these feelings. Specific strategies about alternative ways of responding that some clinicians might consider "nonanalytic" were helpful to him until he became involved in a more meaningful relationship with another man. Unconscious processes are a sort of "boogie-woogie," always rumbling in the background, with desires waiting to be satisfied and connections waiting to be forged. They rumble like a "boogie-woogie" out of awareness all the time until they are activated by external or internal experiences. We can think of the mind as having various aspects of self-representations that are not fully activated influencing our feelings and behaviors without our full knowledge—like Baudelaire's (1857) "city full of swarming ants, city full of dreams where ghosts in plain daylight grab at passers-by."

*Keywords: Unconscious processes, psychology, psychoanalysis, dissociation.*

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# EVALUATION OF THE RED CROSS PROGRAM OF SAVING THE CHILDHOOD OF WAR AFFECTED CHILDREN FROM EX-YUGOSLAVIA IN GREEK FAMILIES

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**Abstract**
In the early 1990s, separation of constituent republics of Yugoslavia led to a civil war. In the following years, Serbia went through a social, political and economic crisis, and UN sanctions. To support children that were most affected by these conditions, a comprehensive Program of children recovery in Greek families was created. Children from Serbia and the Republic of Srpska were sent to Greece for recovery during holidays and for schooling (six months stays). In the period 1993 – 2011, there were 21.648 children (7-16 years of age) that were hosted in families all over Greece. The recovery Program was overseen by the ministries of health, education, social care and foreign affairs in both countries. The aim of this paper was to explore the evaluation of this complicated and complex community-based psycho-social intervention. Qualitative evaluation was based on the available Program documentation, press-clipping, documentary films and semi-structured interviews with participants – ex-children (17), teachers (three),

Red Cross people - employees and volunteers (two) and Greek host families – parents (five). Data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Due to the extremely sensitive situation of the children and overall uncertainty and ambiguity, great care was devoted to the process evaluation that entailed continuous monitoring of children by teachers, physicians, families, Red Cross professionals and volunteers. All children went through the before/after medical checkup. Those that went to school in Greece were assessed by their teachers. As part of the process evaluation of the overall Program, the stay of every group went through outcome evaluation. Teachers, physicians and Red Cross people reported about children's psychophysical health, adaptation and development at the beginning, during and after their stay. Findings were used for improving the stay of the following groups - dealing with selection of children and Greek families, activities with children and caring for their wellbeing. Most important benefits for the children were living in good conditions and safe places, attending school regularly, participating in family life, and shifting their focus from disasters of war. Positive experiences from the perspective of all the stakeholders led to enlargement of the Program. In the period 2021-2024 we performed qualitative evaluation of the Program. Decades later, memories of all the participants were extremely positive. Grown-up children had vivid memories of peaceful life, warmth, peer-related positive emotional memories, memories of sun and sea, and Greek culture. Safety, warmth and abundance were the key memories that were in strong contrast to war related memories. Ties between "ex-children" and Greek families are still strong. Staying with Greek families also had a strong impact on career paths of some children. Positive impact of the Program inspired long-term media attention over the years in both countries. Unique, long-term evaluation shows that however specific, restoration of routines was of critical importance for trauma recovery and resilience-building among war-affected children. The stay in Greece could not heal all the wounds but it helped children be children.

*Keywords: Programme theory evaluation, war affected children, Serbia, Greece.*

Posters

# CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

## SAFER-DEM: GENERATING CO-DESIGNED ADAPTATIONS TO A DISCHARGE CARE PLANNING BUNDLE FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

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**Abstract**
Individuals living with dementia are often excluded from care transitions research and discussions around their discharge from hospital. In collaboration with people living with dementia, their carers and mental health professionals we sought to co-design a dementia inclusive discharge care planning bundle (SAFER-DEM) based on an existing intervention (SAFER mental health care bundle). We used sequential co-design workshops and 'think aloud' methodology to adapt the resources. Think aloud interviews were analysed using Thematic Analysis and highlighted key changes such as simplified language, flexible timings, personalised support, digital and non-digital formats. Better communication and dementia-inclusive hospital environments and processes are needed to improve hospital discharge, the SAFER-DEM shows potential to improve dementia care during hospital discharge.

*Keywords: Mental health services research, care transitions, inpatient mental health services, dementia, shared decision making*

## PRIMAL WORLD BELIEFS AND PERFECTIONISM AS PREDICTORS OF ALCOHOL USE

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**Abstract**
Problematic alcohol use is frequently associated with symptoms of depression and anxiety. A major shift in treating these conditions occurred with Beck's theory on beliefs about the self, the world, and the future, later expanded by the concept of Primal World Beliefs—fundamental beliefs about the world, such as whether it is safe, enticing, or good, which influence how individuals perceive and interact with their environment. Studies also suggest a link between problematic alcohol use and perfectionism, understood as a set of self-focused beliefs that heighten the fear of failure. *Aim:* This study examines the relationships of perfectionism (high standards and discrepancy) and primal beliefs with alcohol use levels. *Method:* The sample included 882 participants (52.5% women; Mage = 33.42; SD = 14.94). Measures included the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (Saunders et al., 1993), the PI-18 Primal Inventory (Clifton & Yaden, 2021), and the Short Almost Perfect Scale (Rice et al., 2014). *Results:* Regression analysis, controlling for age and gender, revealed that lower age, male gender, and lower levels of the Primary Primal belief "Good" predicted higher alcohol use. Perfectionism was not a significant predictor. *Discussion:* These findings contribute to health psychology by linking primal world beliefs to problematic alcohol use, with implications for the prevention of both alcohol misuse and depressive disorders.

*Keywords: Alcohol use, perfectionism, primal world beliefs.*

# PROXIMITY ACROSS DISTANCE: A SMART GLOVE-SLEEVE SYSTEM FOR THE TRANSMISSION OF TOUCH

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## Abstract

*Background.* Physical touch is essential for emotional bonding, yet long-distance relationships lack this sensory dimension, potentially leading to feelings of disconnection and increased mental health risks. Existing communication technologies enable auditory and visual interaction but fail to provide haptic feedback. This study explores touch patterns used to express emotions in face-to-face interactions to inform the development of a Glove-Sleeve System that integrates virtual touch into video calls. *Methods.* We conducted semi-structured interviews with 15 participants across three user groups (grandparents, grandchildren, and long-distance partners). Participants described how they use touch to respond to scenarios designed to elicit joy, fear, anger, sadness, stress, loneliness, thankfulness, and love. Descriptive statistics quantified touch gesture frequency, and Chi-square tests assessed variations across user groups. Heatmaps visualized the distribution of touch behaviors across emotions. *Results.* Participants most frequently reported hugging as their primary touch response. However, due to technological constraints, the study focused on hand and arm touch patterns, with hand holding ($N = 35$) and arm stroking ($N = 30$) being the most common gestures. Fear and stress were most associated with the absence of touch ($N = 21$ for arm, $N = 20$ for hand). Chi-square tests indicated no significant differences in touch patterns between user groups ($p > .05$), suggesting a universal reliance on similar touch interactions to convey emotions. *Conclusion.* Findings suggest that a customizable haptic system should focus on stroking and holding for arm-based interactions and holding, squeezing, and interlocking fingers for hand interactions. Given the frequent occurrence of pressure-based gestures, haptic feedback should incorporate force-sensitive actuation. Future research should explore full body mediated touch and adaptations of hugging in virtual interactions to enhance emotional closeness in remote communication.

*Keywords: Smart textiles, emotional closeness, social connectedness, affective communication, user centered design.*

# FREEDIVING AS A MINDFULNESS PRACTICE FOR TRAUMA RESILIENCE

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## Abstract

Exploring the deep blue sea through freediving is a physical activity and a practice that can foster personal growth and shares several parallels with mindfulness. Our research investigates how freediving sessions contribute to the resilience of individuals who have experienced a dramatic life-changing event. Our main results show that freediving sessions afford participants an opportunity for introspection and acceptance of dramatic life-changing events they had to face. Notably, the trip facilitated their integration into a supportive community, providing them with social reinforcement. Importantly, all participants continued practicing apnea post-trip.

*Keywords: Quality of life, trauma resilience, mindfulness practice, freediving, health intervention.*

# PERFECTIONISM AS A PREDICTOR OF PRIMAL WORLD BELIEFS

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**Abstract**
The study aimed to examine the relationship between primal world beliefs and perfectionism, as both constructs reflect foundational attitudes and expectations that individuals hold about the world and themselves. Previous research has highlighted perfectionism as a mediator between beliefs and anxiety, as well as a correlate of deprivation of social and emotional needs and interpersonal sensitivity, particularly when reality does not align with personal expectations. Our research distinguishes perfectionism into two dimensions – high standards and discrepancy – and focuses on three overarching primal beliefs (safe, enticing, alive) and one primary primal (good), with age and gender included as control variables. *Method*: The sample consisted of 882 participants (52.5% women; Mage = 33.42; SD = 14.94). Measures included the PI-18 Primal Inventory (Clifton et al., 2019) and the Short Almost Perfect Scale (Rice et al., 2014). Separate regression analyses were conducted for each primal belief. *Results*: The primary primal, "Good," was positively associated with age, high standards, and negatively with discrepancy. The primal "Alive" was positively associated with female gender and high standards. "Enticing" was positively related to high standards and age, and negatively to discrepancy. Finally, "Safe" was negatively associated with discrepancy. *Discussion*: The findings suggest a connection between personality and primal beliefs, offering potential implications for psychotherapy. The dimensions of adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism, characterized by secure versus fragile self-evaluations, are reflected in individuals' fundamental beliefs about the world.

*Keywords: Perfectionism, primal world beliefs.*

# THE MEDIATING ROLE OF GRIT IN PERFECTIONISM, DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY AMONG KOREAN YOUTH

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**Abstract**
This study examines the mediating role of grit in the relationship between self-oriented perfectionism (SOP), socially-prescribed perfectionism (SPP), and the mental health outcomes of depression and anxiety. A cross-sectional survey of 747 Korean young adults aged 19–34 years was conducted. Mediation analyses were performed to test the direct and indirect effects of perfectionism dimensions on depression and anxiety through grit. For depression, SPP showed significant direct effects ($\beta = 0.22$, $p < .001$) and indirect effects mediated by grit ($\beta = 0.06$, $p < .001$), accounting for 20.8% of the total effect. SOP showed a significant negative indirect effect through grit ($\beta = -0.03$, $p < .001$), while its direct effect was not significant ($\beta = 0.01$, $p = .944$). The overall effect was significant ($\beta = -0.04$, $p = .014$), suggesting that the overall effect of SOP on depression is primarily driven by its indirect negative pathway through reduced grit, highlighting grit as a key protective mechanism linking SOP to reduced depressive symptoms. For anxiety, SPP again showed significant direct effects ($\beta = 0.24$, $p < .001$) and indirect effects mediated by grit ($\beta = 0.05$, $p < .001$), with 16.2% of the total effect mediated. SOP had a negative indirect effect through grit ($\beta = -0.03$, p $< .001$) and a small positive direct effect ($\beta = 0.01$, $p = .53$), resulting in a non-significant overall effect ($\beta = -0.02$, $p = .11$). These results highlight the distinct roles of SOP and SPP in mental health. SOP primarily influences depression and anxiety through its indirect effects via grit, with increased grit contributing to lower psychological distress. Conversely, SPP directly increases vulnerability to depression and anxiety while decreasing grit, further exacerbating these mental health problems. The findings underscore the importance of addressing grit in interventions aimed at mitigating the negative effects of SPP and promoting resilience among young adults with perfectionistic tendencies.

*Keywords: Self-oriented perfectionism, socially-prescribed perfectionism, grit, depression, anxiety.*

# MOURNING AND THE MANDALA

**Daniela Respini**
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**Abstract**
Grief is a universal human response to death and loss. Mourning is an equally universally observable practice that allows the grieving person to express their grief and come to terms with the reality of the loss. An innovative practice to overcome the pain of losing a loved one is mandala therapy in a round sand tray. Mandala in Sanskrit means "circle", the mandala has potential benefit for the treatment mental disorders. It can be included as a therapeutic mourning process within sand play therapy, a therapeutic technique that is based on the free expression of imagination and individual creativity and which can be used with children, adolescents and adults. In the context of sand play therapy, symbols can be defined as objects or figures that represent something else. They can be concrete or abstract. Symbols can take many forms, such as animals, people, objects, or shapes, stones, berries, twigs, flowers, petals and other natural materials. A traditional mandala is a square containing a circle and the pattern inside of the circle is symmetrical and balanced. A Grief Mandala has no pre-set pattern inside of it. The practice of the mandala is always associated with the technique of breathing and visualization. Sand can also represent feelings of being overwhelmedor trapped, as it can easily dislodge and bury things. Sandplay is a form of therapy that offers clients the opportunity to portray feelings and experiences that are inaccessible or difficult to express in words. Sandplay also provides a balance to the extroverted, verbal, and outer-focused everyday world. Mandalas are a wonderful way to tap into the Creative Self, the part of the psyche that thrives in authenticity. Touching the sand encourages the inner Self to come to the surface, which is the goal in making mandalas and sand trays. The use of mandala and sand thus becomes a useful approach in the elaboration of mourning.

*Keywords: Mandala, grief, healing, sandplay.*

# ASSESSMENT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

**María Paz López Alacid, María Lozano Barrancos, Nieves Gómis Selva, & Nuria Antón Ros**
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**Abstract**
*Introduction:* inclusive education in university curricula is essential to ensure equity and respect for diversity in higher education. Educational inclusion focuses on eliminating barriers that prevent the learning and participation of all students, regardless of their cultural, social or ability differences. *Objectives:* we aim to find out how university students understand and think about inclusive education at their university, in this specific case the University of Alicante (Spain). *Methodology:* this is a non-experimental, expo-facto, descriptive, survey-based and cross-sectional design. The type of sampling is accessibility. From the results obtained, it will be possible to conclude the level of training of higher education students on inclusive education for its subsequent generalization as secondary school teachers and the pedagogical practices and strategies that must be implemented to provide quality education. The Questionnaire used for the evaluation of inclusive university education (CEEIU) is by the author De la Herrán Gascón et al. (2017). *Results:* Based on the analysis of the results, it will be possible to conclude the level of training of higher education students on inclusive education for its later generalization as secondary education teachers in their respective educational centers. *Conclusions:* In addition, in view of the results obtained, we can affirm that inclusive education promotes pedagogical innovation, since it encourages universities to adopt flexible and adaptive methodologies. Inclusive education not only benefits students with specific needs, but also improves the learning experience for all. In the university context, it also contributes to reducing school dropout, by providing an environment that recognizes and values individual particularities. Thus, this study is aimed at promoting tolerant and respectful attitudes in attention to functional diversity and educational inclusion in university students.

*Keywords: University education, educational inclusion, students.*

# EFFECTS OF THE USE OF FEEDBACK IN PSYCHOTHERAPY: TWO CASE STUDIES

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**Abstract**
The research shows that the highest percentage of effectiveness in psychotherapy is due to a series of extra-therapeutic variables, among which the feedback provided in the therapeutic session stands out (Wampold & Imel, 2015). The way in which outcomes are evaluated in psychotherapy on which feedback is given to the patient is called Routine Outcome Monitoring (ROM), which consists of the periodic inter-session evaluation of the progress of psychological treatment. To evaluate the patient's progress throughout treatment, the Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation-Outcome Measure (CORE; Evans et al., 2002) stands out, although there are few studies that have tested the effectiveness of its use. The objective of this work is to analyze the impact of the feedback that the therapist provides to the patient on their progress, based on the use of the CORE, in routine clinical practice. The sample was made up of two participants who were treated in private clinical practice, aged between 50 and 60 years, who presented anxiety-depressive problems of varying severity without other diagnoses. The instruments used were the CORE-18 and CORE-34 to evaluate the inter-session progress of the patients, the first composed of two parallel forms that alternate in their application, and the SCL-90-R (Derogatis, 1977) to evaluate clinical symptoms. The session-by-session CORE-18 scores, and the CORE-34 scores obtained every three months, were used to monitor progress and provide feedback to the patient about the evolution of treatment. Analysis of treatment effects was carried out using a single-case design, and statistical analyses were used to quantify the magnitude of the treatment effect, the reliability of the change, and its clinical significance (Jacobson & Truax, 1991). The results showed reliable and significant changes, with an effect size that qualified the treatment as very effective, in both participants. The results obtained allow us to conclude that the CORE questionnaire appears to be an effective tool for systematic monitoring of results, which has in turn proven useful for carrying out an effective intervention in patients with anxiety-depressive problems of different severity.

*Keywords: Psychotherapy efficacy, routine outcome monitoring, CORE, feedback, case study.*

# THE DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF THE EMOTIONAL ENTITLEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE (EEQ)

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**Abstract**
Beliefs about what one is entitled to emotionally may make a unique contribution to emotional and interpersonal experiences. In the current study we introduce the concept of emotional entitlement, the degree to which people believe they have the right to experience different emotions (e.g., the right to feel happy, angry etc.). Our aim was to develop and validate the emotional entitlement questionnaire (EEQ). In a series of 3 studies, we constructed and validated a 3-factor, 15-item emotional entitlement questionnaire (EEQ), in Hebrew and in English: emotional entitlement to positive emotions (EEP), to negative emotions (EEN), and the maladaptive aspect of emotional entitlement which we termed uncompromised emotional entitlement (EEU). Different dimensions of the EEQ were related to different levels of life satisfaction and loneliness. The results indicate that emotional entitlement is a multidimensional construct and that the EEQ is a reliable and valid tool with good psychometric properties and that overall, we would suggest that EEP represents an adaptive aspect of emotional entitlement, EEU represents a maladaptive aspect, and EEN has both adaptive and maladaptive aspects.

*Keywords: Emotional entitlement, emotions, factor analysis, scale.*

# MANY LANGUAGES, ONE VOICE:
# MENTAL STRENGTH THROUGH DIVERSITY

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**Abstract**
This exploratory study investigates whether language-switching behavior in adolescence is used to conceal thoughts and its relationship with mental stability in adulthood among multilingual individuals. The theoretical framework suggests that language-switching, particularly in response to negative stimuli, may enhance emotional regulation and cognitive flexibility. Language-switching, also known as code-switching, is a common phenomenon among multilingual individuals, where they alternate between languages depending on the context, audience, or emotional state. Previous research has indicated that bilinguals and multilinguals often switch languages to better express their emotions or to align with the emotional context of a conversation. This study aims to extend this understanding by examining the long-term effects of language-switching on mental stability. Data collection for this empirical study is complete. Participants were recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk, resulting in a sample of 155 multilingual adults ($N_{Males}$ = 124, $M_{Age}$ = 34.12 years, $SD_{Age}$ = 5.95). Participants were selected based on their experience with language-switching and multilingualism. The survey included self-assessment Likert scale questions designed to measure the frequency and context of language-switching to conceal thoughts during adolescence, and the ability to maintain calmness and control in pressure situations as indicators of mental stability in adulthood. The independent variable, language-switching to conceal thoughts, was defined as the conscious choice to change languages during a conversation to hide one's thoughts from the interlocutor. The dependent variable, mental stability, was defined as the ability to remain calm and composed in stressful situations, measured through a self-assessment questionnaire. Data were analyzed using SPSS, and the results revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between language-switching and mental stability ($r$ = 0.314, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that individuals who frequently switched languages to manage their emotions during adolescence tend to exhibit better mental stability in adulthood. The findings support the hypothesis that language-switching in adolescence is linked to better mental stability in adulthood. The positive correlation indicates that multilingual individuals who engage in language-switching as a strategy to conceal thoughts and manage emotions may develop enhanced emotional regulation skills over time. The study underscores the importance of multilingualism in fostering emotional and cognitive flexibility, offering valuable insights for future research on multilingualism and mental health. By understanding the benefits of language-switching, psychologists and educators can better support multilingual individuals in leveraging their linguistic abilities for improved emotional regulation and mental well-being.

*Keywords: Language-switching, emotion regulation, adolescence, adulthood, mental stability.*

# PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES AND INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE:
# CHALLENGES FOR PSYCHOLOGISTS DEALING WITH CULTURAL
# DIVERSITY IN FRENCH-SPEAKING BELGIUM

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**Abstract**
The rapid rise in cultural diversity worldwide is a result of extensive migrations. While it is essential for professionals to integrate the cultural specificities of their patients into their clinical practices, a review of the scientific literature reveals a significant training deficit in cultural competencies. Scientific literature indicates that individuals from various cultural backgrounds often receive inadequate care and face barriers in accessing healthcare services. This study aims to provide an overview of the situation in the French-speaking part of Belgium. We investigate how psychologists consider the cultural specificities of patients with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds in their clinical practice to provide adequate care.

*Keywords: Cultural diversity, practices, psychologists, assessment.*

# CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE VALIDATION OF THE PET ATTACHMENT QUESTIONNAIRE (PAQ) IN THE PORTUGUESE POPULATION: A PRELIMINARY STUDY

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**Abstract**
Background: The Pet Attachment Questionnaire (PAQ) assesses the nature of human-companion animal attachment. Despite its relevance, its validation in the Portuguese population has not been extensively studied. This study aims to validate the PAQ in a Portuguese sample, evaluating its factorial structure, reliability, and construct validity. Aims: To examine the psychometric properties of the PAQ in a Portuguese population, including factor structure, internal consistency, and construct validity. Method: A sample of 587 participants completed the PAQ. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation was conducted. Internal consistency was assessed through Cronbach's alpha. Descriptive statistics were also calculated. Results: Factor analysis revealed a two-factor structure, accounting for 40.85% of the total variance. The first factor (Avoidant Attachment) explained 21.40% of the variance, and the second factor (Anxious Attachment) explained 19.45%. Reliability analysis indicated strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha of .86 for the Avoidant Attachment subscale and .82 for the Anxious Attachment subscale. Conclusion: The PAQ showed satisfactory psychometric properties in a Portuguese sample, supporting a two-factor structure consistent with attachment theory. The measure showed high reliability, making it a suitable instrument for assessing pet attachment in Portuguese-speaking populations.

*Keywords: Pet attachment, human-animal bond, animal companion, reliability, Portuguese population.*

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# EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND COPING STRATEGIES IN FUTURE SCHOOL COUNSELLORS

**María Lozano Barrancos, María Paz López Alacid, Nuria Antón Ros, & Nieves Gómis Selva**
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**Abstract**
*Introduction:* The emotional intelligence (EI) of school counsellors is currently of particular relevance due to the increasing number of emotional problems affecting their mental well-being. This not only affects their professional performance, but also has repercussions on their personal lives. To date, training programmes seem to ignore this fact. *Objectives:* 1) to obtain information on the need to include EI in training programmes; 2) to determine whether the meta-knowledge of the three emotional dimensions assessed: attention (feeling/expressing their emotions appropriately); clarity (understanding their emotions well) and emotional repair (regulating their emotions appropriately) is adequate; 2) to assess whether they have the appropriate coping strategies to manage and solve emotional problems in their daily lives; 3) to analyse whether there is a significant correlation between the emotional dimensions and the coping strategies applied. *Method:* this is a non-experimental (ex post facto), descriptive and survey-based study, with non-probabilistic sampling of the incidental or accessibility type. Data collection to assess emotional intelligence was by self-report, applying the Trait-Meta-Mood Scale for the Assessment of Emotion Expression, Management and Recognition (TMMS-24). Data on the strategies used to solve everyday emotional problems were obtained by applying the Coping Strategies Inventory [CSI]. They were analysed using descriptive statistics, comparison of means and Spearman's correlation coefficient. The sample consisted of 36 subjects. *Results:* the results allow us to identify the emotional intelligence profile in the three dimensions evaluated, obtaining that between 66%-69% have an adequate profile and between 31%-34% need to improve by defect or excess. As for the coping strategies, four of them are within the average range and another four above the average, with respect to the normal population. There is a positive correlation between the emotional dimensions and the total CSI score. *Conclusions:* From the results obtained, we conclude that, although the sample of this study shows acceptable levels of EI, it is essential that emotional intelligence occupies a prominent place in the training programmes of these professionals, as a percentage of the total CSI score is higher than that of the normal population.

*Keywords: Emotional intelligence, coping strategies, school counsellor, master's degree in education, TMMS-24.*

# POSITIVE SELF-TALK: PROMOTING CONSTRUCTIVE AND GOAL-DIRECTED SELF-CRITICISM. PROPOSAL FOR A NEW PROTOCOL OF INTERVENTION

**Micaela Di Consiglio[1,2], Francesca D'Olimpio[1], & Alessandro Couyoumdjian[2]**
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**Abstract**
Self-criticism is associated with various mental disorders and can negatively impact relationships, performance, and goal achievement. However, self-criticism can also be adaptive when it promotes realistic and constructive reflection, fostering personal improvement and goal attainment. Many interventions aim to reduce self-criticism by encouraging self-compassion; however, it has been demonstrated that self-criticism and self-compassion are distinct processes that can coexist. Moreover, most interventions overlook the adaptive function of self-criticism and, despite its negative impact on goal achievement, often fail to integrate strategies that enhance goal-directed behavior. Therefore, this study presents the development of a novel intervention designed to reduce dysfunctional self-criticism while fostering a constructive and goal-oriented approach. An extensive literature review and expert consultations were conducted to analyze theoretical models and existing treatments. The prevalence of maladaptive self-criticism was considered to identify the target population. Various delivery formats were evaluated to ensure the intervention was scalable, accessible, and cost-effective while maintaining efficacy. As a result of this structured development process, "Positive Self-Talk" was created as a preventive tool aimed at healthy individuals, recognizing that even in non-clinical populations, internal dialogue is often dominated by self-critical content. The intervention integrates techniques from Positive Psychology, third-wave Cognitive-Behavioral models, and the Nonviolent Communication model. Designed as an online guided self-help program, it ensures broad accessibility, scalability, and cost-effectiveness while overcoming common barriers associated with traditional therapy. Positive Self-Talk comprises six structured modules combining psychoeducation, self-monitoring tools, and practical exercises. These modules help users identify dysfunctional self-criticism, explore its underlying motivations, and transform it into a more constructive and adaptive process. Functional imagery techniques are incorporated to reinforce learning and facilitate goal achievement. Moreover, participants receive support from a trained Tutor, a psychologist who fosters motivation, commitment, and personal goal attainment through activity monitoring and online guidance. Positive Self-Talk is hypothesized to reduce dysfunctional self-criticism, enhance psychological well-being, and support pursuing meaningful goals. Future steps include evaluating its efficacy through empirical studies, with plans to adapt and extend its application to clinical populations.

*Keywords: Self-criticism, guided self-help intervention, prevention, goal-oriented behavior, psychological well-being.*

# ADOLESCENT WELL-BEING: THE ROLE OF GENDER, MENTAL HEALTH ATTITUDES AND HELP-SEEKING BEHAVIORS IN SLOVENIAN STUDENTS

**Manja Veldin, Igor Peras, & Maša Vidmar**
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**Abstract**
Well-being is shaped by a range of factors, including personal characteristics (e.g., gender, age), internal factors (e.g., individual needs, emotions and traits) and external influences such as family and peer support systems. Given the notable decline in well-being during adolescence - particularly among girls and those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds (Michel et al., 2009; Yoon et al., 2023) - it is crucial to identify and understand its predictors. This study aimed to investigate the predictors of well-being among a sample of 39 Slovenian primary school students ($M_{age}$ = 14 years; 48.7% male). Specifically, the role of gender, attitudes towards mental health, help-seeking intentions and perceived barriers to help-seeking were examined. Participants completed the Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (SWEMBS), the Mental Health Literacy Scale (MHLS), the General Help-Seeking Questionnaire (GHSQ) and the Barriers to Adolescent Help-Seeking (BASH). Hierarchical regression analysis, with mental well-being as the

dependent variable, revealed that gender was a significant predictor in model 1, accounting for 15.2% of the variance. However, when two dimensions of attitudes towards mental health were included in model 2 (attitudes towards people with mental health problems; general attitudes towards mental health problems and help-seeking), the explained variance did not increase significantly and none of the predictors reached statistical significance. Model 3, which also included help-seeking intentions and belief-based barriers, explained the largest proportion of variance ($R^2 = .540$, $p < .001$) and identified general attitudes toward mental health problems and help-seeking, help-seeking intentions, and belief-based barriers to help-seeking as significant predictors. The results suggest that while gender is initially associated with mental well-being, attitudes and behavioural intentions have a more substantial impact. Higher help-seeking intentions were associated with better well-being, whereas perceived barriers to help-seeking negatively predicted well-being. The negative association between positive mental health attitudes and well-being suggests a complex relationship that requires further investigation (e.g., possible moderating factors: personal experience with mental health issues). These findings suggest that further research is needed to explore these dynamics in more detail, particularly in relation to interventions that promote positive attitudes and help-seeking behaviours in young people. Future research should address the study's limitations using larger and more diverse samples, longitudinal designs, and mixed methods approaches.

*Keywords: Well-being, adolescents, mental health, help-seeking, gender.*

# DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW SCALE TO ASSESS ADVERSE LIFE EVENTS AND PROTECTIVE AND COMPENSATORY EXPERIENCES

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**Abstract**
Background: Life experiences are subjectively perceived, and what constitutes an adverse event varies across individuals. While some experiences are universally recognized as stressful, their impact is shaped by personal interpretations and contextual factors. Additionally, protective and compensatory experiences can play a crucial role in mitigating perceived adversity, yet existing assessment tools often neglect these dimensions. Aims: This study presents the Adverse Life Events and Protective and Compensatory Experiences Questionnaire (AVA-EPC), a novel instrument designed to capture the subjective perception of adverse life events and the presence of protective and compensatory experiences. Method: The AVA-EPC was developed to assess how individuals personally experience and interpret life challenges rather than relying on predefined categories of adversity. The scale consists of two main components: (1) self-reported adverse life events, where individuals identify experiences they perceive as adverse, rate their severity, and describe their ongoing impact; and (2) protective and compensatory experiences, capturing self-perceived support, coping mechanisms, and positive influences that counterbalance adversity. The questionnaire allows participants to specify the context, frequency, and duration of these experiences, ensuring a nuanced, individualized assessment. Results & Conclusion: By prioritizing subjective experiences, the AVA-EPC offers a person-centered approach to understanding adversity and resilience. This scale provides a valuable tool for researchers and clinicians seeking to explore the interplay between perceived hardship and compensatory factors. Future studies will focus on validating its psychometric properties and exploring its applications in diverse populations.

*Keywords: Adverse Life Events, protective experiences, compensatory mechanisms, resilience, life stressors.*

# EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

## STUDENT-TEACHER RELATIONS OF IMMIGRANT BACKGROUND STUDENTS: INSIGHTS FROM SLOVENIA AND CROATIA

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**Abstract**
Student-teacher relationships play a critical role in supporting students' academic success and psychological well-being. However, perceptions of these relationships can vary, with students from immigrant backgrounds often at risk for less positive interactions compared to their native peers. Challenges such as language acquisition and cultural adjustment may contribute to these challenges (Ialuna et al., 2024). Positive student-teacher relationships can serve as a key mechanism for immigrant students to adapt to their school environment, fostering inclusion, social engagement, and a sense of school belonging. The ICCS 2022 study provides a valuable framework for exploring the dynamics of student-teacher relationships, particularly through variables related to civic and citizenship education. This paper investigates how predictors such as openness in classroom discussions, influence on school decision-making, and participation in civic activities are associated with student-teacher relationships among students with an immigrant background in Slovenia and Croatia. The study utilizes representative data from the ICCS 2022 cycle of which 21 % of students from Slovenia and 6 % from Croatia reported to have an immigrant background. Descriptive statistics, correlation coefficients, and linear regression models were calculated using RALSA (Mirazchiyski, 2021). The findings reveal both commonalities and differences in the factors predicting student-teacher relationships among immigrant students across the two neighboring countries. Findings are discussed through the view of democratic school and classroom culture with considerations of practical implications.

*Keywords: Student-teacher relations, immigrant background, students, ICCS 2022.*

## RELATIONS BETWEEN PERSONALITY TRAITS AND PARENTING STYLES ASSESSMENT IN STUDENTS

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**Abstract**
Personality traits play an important role in almost all aspects of an individual's functioning and are one of the bases for assessing the way parents raise children. Therefore, the question arises as to how young people with different personality traits perceive their parents and what their experience of closeness, emotional warmth/coldness, and set boundaries is. The aim of the research reported here was to examine whether personality traits and gender can be a basis for predicting parents' educational styles. The ZKPQ (Zuckerman-Kuhlman Personality Questionnaire) (Zuckerman et al., 1999) questionnaire was chosen to measure the following basic personality traits: activity, aggressiveness, sensation seeking, neuroticism, sociability. The Parenting Styles Measurement Questionnaire - PSDQ (Robinson et al., 2001) was used to operationalize four educational styles: authoritarian father, authoritarian mother, authoritative father, and authoritative mother. The sample was convenient and consisted of 291 students ($N_{female}$ = 72.5%), aged 18 to 24 years (M = 19.19; SD = 1.37). The respondents were high school students and first and second-year students of the Faculty of Philosophy in Niš, Serbia. The collected data were statistically processed using the regression analysis procedure, and the main results are as follows. The student's personality traits could explain 9.5% total variance in the authoritarian parenting style of fathers ($R^2$ = .09, $F_{5,207}$ = 4.36, $p$ = .001) while significant predictors were aggressiveness ($\beta$ = .26, $t$ = 3.73, $p$ < .001) and neuroticism ($\beta$ = .17, $t$ = 2.41, $p$ < .017). Neuroticism was also found to be a significant predictor of the mother's authoritarian parenting style ($\beta$ = .14, $t$ = 2.09, $p$ = .037). Gender was a significant predictor of the father's authoritative parenting style ($\beta$ = .13, $t$ = 1.97, $p$ = .049). The results obtained are considered from the perspective of the theoretical framework of this research and the existing empirical evidence. Possible educational and other implications of the findings of this study are also outlined.

*Keywords: Personality traits, parenting styles, gender differences, students.*

# THE EFFECT OF WORD LENGTH ON ITS RECOGNITION AMONG CHILDREN WITH DIFFERENT READING SPEED LEVELS

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**Abstract**

When acquiring reading skills, a child must be able to decode the visual properties that characterize each letter, as well as the letters and written words as a whole. Phonological encoding enables recognition and construction of the sound structure of written symbols and word as a whole (Vellutino et al., 2004). When reading unfamiliar words, they are initially processed sequentially, letter by letter or syllable by syllable, through phonological processing. To successfully recognize a word, at least 10–20 ms is required for the perception and identification of each letter. This word recognition model is primarily used when attempting to recognize an unfamiliar or new word or when learning to read. In contrast, an experienced reader uses their accumulated knowledge of word forms, vocabulary, and meaning, processing graphemes in parallel through lexical processing (Coltheart et al., 2001). The main aim of the study was to investigate how word length affects its recognition in different groups of readers, categorized by their reading speed. Twenty-eight second-grade and twenty-seven third-grade children completed a word recognition test with 105 words of varying length and phonetic complexity, selected by the school speech therapist based on consonant cluster properties. The words consisted of 4-10 letters. For each word length, 15 words were presented in random order for 533 ms each. The analysis used the percentage of correctly answered words for each corresponding word length. Based on reading speed, the second-grade children were divided into two groups: one with an average reading speed of $50\pm5$ wpm (n=14) and the other with an average reading speed of $78\pm4$ wpm (n=14). The third-grade children were divided into a group with an average reading speed of $67\pm7$ wpm (n=13) and a group with an average of $113\pm6$ wpm (n=14). The results indicate that word length affects word recognition accuracy. This relationship is described by linear regression analysis. A more significant relationship is observed in the slower-reading groups. The slope coefficients of the relationship differ significantly between faster and slower readers - in the second-grade group ($p<0.012$), and in the third-grade group ($p<0.001$).

*Keywords: Reading speed, word recognition, school-age children.*

# SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

## CAN SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS EXPLAIN PARENTAL OVERPROTECTION?

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**Abstract**
Background: Parental overprotection is a form of overparenting, parental behaviour that is not developmentally appropriate for the child's age. It may include the following: excessive physical and social contact from the parent, an exaggerated fear for the child, a tendency to protect them from minor dangers, and solving problems on their behalf. Factors predicting this behaviour are not well explored yet. Aim: This paper aims to determine whether socio-demographic factors (gender, age, marital status, education, monthly income, living area, and number of children) can predict parental overprotection. Methods: The participants of this study consisted of 738 parents (mean age 46.4, 80.42% female). Multiple regression analysis between parental overprotection and seven socio-demographic factors was conducted using Jamovi software. Results: Out of the seven variables, two were statistically significant – education ($p = .006$) and monthly household income ($p = .029$). Therefore, it can be expected that a lower level of education, as well as a lower average monthly household income, is associated with a higher level of overprotection. The regression model explained 4.6% of the variance of the dependent variable. The observed sociodemographic variables are only slightly related.

*Keywords: Parental overprotection, socio-demographic factors.*

## VOCATIONAL TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN LITHUANIA: THE ROLE OF MOTIVATION AND JOB SATISFACTION

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**Abstract**
Both teachers' motivation for professional development and their job satisfaction have been widely studied by many researchers in recent decades. However, the motivation for professional development and job satisfaction of teachers in vocational education institutions are insufficiently assessed compared to teachers in other educational levels. Perhaps for the first time in Lithuania, this study explores the links between teachers' motivation for professional development and their job satisfaction by conducting research with 426 teachers from 27 vocational education institutions. The purpose of this study is to identify factors related to professional development that have significant predictive value for vocational teachers' job satisfaction. Vocational teachers' motivation for professional development was measured using the Questionnaire of Motivational Factors in Predicting Academic Achievement (Pang, Lee, 2013). Participants were also asked to assess their overall job satisfaction, the peculiarities of participation in professional development activities (participation in professional development activities in the past 12 months, etc.) and to indicate sociodemographic characteristics. The results of this study suggest that teachers of vocational education institutions are motivated to grow professionally, and 78.2 percent of vocational teachers indicated that they are generally satisfied with their work. A statistically significant relationship was found between teachers' motivation for professional development and their job satisfaction, and significant differences in motivation for professional development and job satisfaction were also identified by gender, age, qualification category and seniority. Finally, regression analysis revealed that factors such as intrinsic motivation for professional development, qualification category, and time spent in professional development events have statistically significant prognostic value for vocational teachers' job satisfaction.

*Keywords: Motivation for professional development, job satisfaction, vocational teachers, vocational training institutions.*

# INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS OF THE BEHAVIORAL IMMUNE SYSTEM IN JAPAN, MALAYSIA AND THE PHILIPPINES

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to examine the characteristics of the human behavioral immune system (BIS) by comparing its properties in three Asian countries (Japan, Malaysia, and the Philippines). A total of 1,142 university students completed paper-and-pencil questionnaires, including the Perceived Vulnerability to Disease questionnaire (PVD-Q), the Death Anxiety Scale, and a rating of their current subjective health status. Bayesian analyses were conducted on the valid data provided by 1,055 undergraduate students. Women were found to score higher than men on the germ aversion subscale of the PVD-Q (unpleasant feelings induced in contexts of a high potential for pathogen transmission), regardless of their nationality. In addition, participants from the tropical countries (Malaysia and the Philippines) scored higher in germ aversion compared to those from Japan, which is mostly in the temperate climate zone. No such significant sex and regional differences were observed on the other PVD-Q subscale (perceived infectability: beliefs about the susceptibility to infectious diseases). Perceived infectability was strongly associated with current health status, but less closely associated with fear of death, whereas germ aversion was highly associated with fear of death but not associated with health status. These associations between fear of death or health status and the PVD subscales were generally consistent across all three countries. The implication of these findings is that perceived infectability reflects an individual's proximate health-related beliefs or condition, while germ aversion rather reflects the ultimate evolutionary process of adaptation internalized in his or her mind. Anyway, both functions of the BIS seem to provide proactive defenses against pathogens in different ways.

*Keywords: Behavioral immune system, disgust avoidance, death anxiety, sex difference, geographic difference.*

# SOCIALLY-PRESCRIBED PERFECTIONISM, MINDFULNESS AND DEPRESSION: THE MODERATING ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA SELF-CONTROL FAILURE

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**Abstract**

In the competitive society of South Korea, the prevalence of depressive symptoms among young adults has been observed to increase. Depression affects the psychological well-being of individuals, and socially-prescribed perfectionism (SPP), characterized by self-criticism and self-doubt, has been identified as a primary predictor of depression. SPP is a difficult personality trait to change. Mindfulness, however, can help individuals view themselves with greater objectivity, which may help reduce negative emotions. The proliferation of social media among young adults has created new avenues for information sharing and communication. However, it has also led to social comparison and idealization, which can have detrimental effects on individuals. It is noteworthy that social media self-control, defined as the ability to control social media use, may enhance internal locus of control and self-regulation, thereby mitigating the negative effects of SPP. The present study examined the mediating effect of mindfulness in the relationship between SPP and depression, moderated by social media self-control failure. The study included 747 South Korean adults who participated in an online survey. The data were analyzed using SPSS 29.0 and Process Macro 4.2. First, the mediating effect of mindfulness in the relationship between SPP and depression was examined. The results indicated that SPP was negatively related to mindfulness and that mindfulness was negatively related to depression. In addition, SPP was positively linked to depression, with the mediation effect being statistically significant. Second, the moderated mediation effect of mindfulness and social media self-control failure was supported. The results indicated that social media self-control failure had a significant influence on the pathway to mindfulness, and the interaction between socially prescribed perfectionism and social media self-control failure also influenced the pathway to mindfulness. This study provides empirical support that social media self-control ability can mitigate the pathway from SPP to depression via mindfulness. Interventions aimed at enhancing this ability may promote psychological well-being and prevent depression among young people in South Korea.

*Keywords: Socially-Prescribed Perfectionism, mindfulness, depression, social media self-control, South Korean adults.*

# COGNITIVE AND EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

## SHARED CORTICAL ARCHITECTURE OF SPATIAL NAVIGATION AND PLANNING: A COMPREHENSIVE META-ANALYSIS

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**Abstract**
Planning is a crucial aspect of spatial navigation and visuospatial tasks, relying on both shared and distinct neural mechanisms, which are not yet fully understood. We conducted an Activation Likelihood Estimation (ALE) meta-analysis on fMRI studies examining active, goal-directed navigation and visuospatial planning tasks (i.e., the Tower of London paradigm). Conjunction and contrast analyses revealed a shared network encompassing bilateral frontal regions, including the superior frontal gyrus (SFG), middle frontal gyrus (MFG), anterior insula (INS), and clusters in the left supplementary motor area (SMA) and right inferior frontal gyrus (IFGtriang). Contrast analyses highlighted greater involvement of the hippocampus (HIP) and parahippocampal gyrus (PHG) in navigation, and posterior parietal and dorsolateral prefrontal regions in visuospatial planning. These findings elucidate the neural mechanisms involved in these processes, highlighting the common amodal regions that play a role in both visuo-spatial planning and spatial navigation. This study offers a deeper understanding of the fundamental deficits linked to neurodevelopmental disorders and brain injuries.

*Keywords: Human navigation, visuo-spatial planning, travel planning, ALE meta-analysis, fMRI.*

## EFFECTS OF ORIENTATION ON SYMMETRIC OBJECTS DETECTION ON NOISY BACKGROUND

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**Abstract**
Image contours correspond to objects' outlines, surface orientation changes, or texture features. Previous research indicates that detecting contours defined by separate elements depends on their closure and curvature. Closed contours are recognized more quickly, but this advantage diminishes when the contour curvature changes. However, more information is needed about how object recognition interacts with symmetry detection and the dynamics of this interaction. The present study aims to investigate the dynamics of detecting equilateral triangles embedded in noise, depending on their orientation. The stimuli consisted of 1,488 Gabor elements arranged in a hexagonal grid with 48 columns and 31 rows. The orientations of the elements were randomized, except for twelve elements aligned along the sides of an equilateral triangle, with a top element perpendicular to the triangle's base. The triangle was positioned randomly in successive trials, and its orientation could be left/right or up/down. Participants were required to identify the triangle's orientation by pressing a joystick button. Thirty-seven healthy observers (mean age 41 years, range 20-69 years; 23 males, 14 females) participated in the study. The temporal threshold for triangle detection was examined separately for the horizontal and vertical orientations. The results of our study revealed significant individual differences among subjects and a shorter detection time for left/right oriented triangles compared to those oriented up/down. The modeling results, obtained through a Bayesian hierarchical model, indicated significant differences in the probability of a correct response based on the orientation of the stimuli. The highest percentage of correct responses occurred when the triangle's apex pointed to the right, while the lowest - when the triangle's apex pointed downward. These results could not be explained by perceptual asymmetries related to the location of objects in the visual field or the orientation of the symmetry axis. They suggest that object recognition occurs in allocentric coordinates and precedes symmetry detection.

*Keywords: Contour integration, object recognition, symmetry, perceptual biases.*

# INTEGRATIVE EXPLORATION OF MORAL JUDGEMENT: WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE DUAL THOUGHT PROCESS?

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**Abstract**

Dual thought process is a central model in cognitive psychology. It determines two distinct cognitive systems to process information. "System 1" is fast, automatic, intuitive and emotional. "System 2" is slower, deliberative, analytical and logical. This dual thought process model has found applications in many areas, including the area of moral judgement. The duality of thought in moral judgement was objectified through psychological and neuroscientific methodology and determines two distinct processes: a first automatic, rapid affective process corresponding to deontology and emotionally motivated heuristics, and a second slow, laborious deliberative process corresponding to utilitarianism and rationality. These two processes are associated with functional activations of distinct brain regions/networks, highlighting a neurofunctional signature linked with psychological facts. We carried out a PRISMA literature review in order to explore the operationality of this link by identifying its neuroarchitectural and neurodevelopmental bases. We used APA search databases Psycinfos/psycnets, PubMed and Embase/Science Direct, with the keywords 'moral judgement' or 'moral dilemma' and 'dual process', from 2001 to publications of May 2023, in general population. Initially, 959 heterogeneous references were found, and from these, we led a selection process resulting in 16 final references. We found that a complex neuroarchitectural base supports the systems and involves different networks that activate and/or inhibit depending on the characteristics of the moral stimuli. This base has a chronological development and is linked to neurodevelopmental skills (theory of mind, moral emotions, maturation of executive functions including inhibitory control and memory). The latter are: at the origin of functionalities like perspective of justice/ prosocial behavior, react to situational factors in the moral stimulus, and mediate variabilities in the production of moral judgements. The limits of the model to be taken into account are cultural, conceptual and methodological. Thus, the duality of moral judgement appears to be integrative and relevant, and in this context, attention should be paid to neurodevelopmental status and to neurofunctional investigation tools to improve future research methodologies.

*Keywords: Moral judgement, dual process, neuroarchitecture, neurodevelopment, integrative.*

# PARALLEL SEMANTIC PROCESSING IN EARLY READING ACQUISITION: EVIDENCE FROM THE RAPID PARALLEL VISUAL PRESENTATION PARADIGM

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**Abstract**

This study investigates whether the "Parafoveal-on-Foveal" (PoF) and "Parafoveal Preview Effect" (PPE), effects observed in adults, also occur in children learning to read. These effects involve faster reading times and improved accuracy when semantic relatedness is present between foveal and parafoveal words. These semantic effects are explored in young readers through the administration of the Rapid Parallel Visual Presentation (RPVP). Forty-six children from 1st to 5th grade were divided into two groups based on the reading acquisition, defined based on literature. The group of beginner readers is composed of 12 children attending 1st and 2nd grade, while children attending from 3rd to 5th grade composed the group of experienced readers. Preliminary results show reduced reading times of the foveal word (PoF) and higher accuracy in reading the parafoveal word (PPE), suggesting that semantic parafoveal processing occurs already in the early stages of development.

*Keywords: Reading, semantic processing, rapid parallel visual presentation paradigm, parafoveal-on-foveal effect, parafoveal preview effect.*

# RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LONELINESS AND ATTENTION COMPONENTS IN RELATION TO MORNING OR EVENING CHRONOTYPES

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**Abstract**
Chronotype, an individual's natural inclination toward specific sleep-wake patterns, reflects biological rhythms influenced by factors such as age, environment, and societal norms. Research links chronotype to various cognitive and emotional aspects, yet its combined effect on attention and loneliness remains unexplored. This study examines the relationships between chronotype, attention, and loneliness, focusing on three attention components assessed by the Attention Network Test (ANT): alerting (maintaining readiness to respond), orienting (shifting attention to a target), and executive control (resolving conflicting information). To this end, A sample of 122 right-handed participants, aged 34-55, completed the Morningness-Eveningness Questionnaire, the UCLA Loneliness Scale, and the ANT. Results revealed a negative correlation between chronotype and loneliness, with evening types reporting higher loneliness levels. Surprisingly, morning chronotypes exhibited poorer executive control performance compared to evening types. While loneliness was not directly associated with attention, a moderation effect emerged in the orienting component, where morning types with low loneliness showed slower orienting performance. These findings underscore the interplay between biological rhythms, emotional states, and cognitive processes, suggesting tailored interventions addressing chronotype and loneliness. Future research should explore these dynamics across diverse populations to inform targeted strategies for improving mental and emotional health.

*Keywords: Chronotype, attention, loneliness.*

# EXPLORING COGNITIVE BIASES AND EXTERNAL FACTORS IN CRYPTOCURRENCY INVESTMENT THROUGH AN EXTENDED TAM FRAMEWORK

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**Abstract**
The growing interest in cryptocurrency investment is driven by the allure of high returns, often amplified by media narratives and technological novelty. However, this enthusiasm frequently overlooks significant risks such as market volatility, fraud, hacking, and regulatory uncertainty. Cognitive biases, including the Ostrich Effect (Galai & Sade, 2003) and Pro-Innovation Bias (Rogers, 1976), distort decision-making. This study investigates the psychological, social, and knowledge-based factors influencing cryptocurrency investment decisions and proposes strategies to mitigate risks through improved financial education. Using an extended Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the research explores the roles of social influence, financial knowledge, future outlook, along with perceived usefulness and ease of use in shaping investment intentions. The findings highlight that social influence (B = .378, $p < .001$), financial knowledge (B = .349, $p < .001$), and optimism about the future of cryptocurrencies (B = .199, $p < .001$) significantly impact the willingness to invest. Additionally, perceived usefulness (B = .265, $p < .001$) strongly predicts investment choices, while ease of use (B = .112, $p > .05$) has a negligible effect. Higher levels of social influence, financial knowledge, and optimism are associated with a stronger intention to invest in cryptocurrencies. These results suggest that targeted financial education can help reduce cognitive biases, promote a better understanding of cryptocurrency risks, and encourage safer investment choices.

*Keywords: Cryptocurrency investment, cognitive biases, financial education, Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), social influence.*

# EXPLORING INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN VISUAL WORKING MEMORY: SHARED COGNITIVE MECHANISMS ACROSS CHANGE DETECTION AND DELAYED ESTIMATION TASKS

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**Abstract**

Understanding individual differences in visual working memory performance is critical for uncovering the cognitive mechanisms underlying memory formation and retrieval. In this study, we investigated how performance varies across two widely used tasks: the delayed estimation (DE) task and the change detection (CD) task. Across three experiments, we interspersed DE and CD trials with identical displays while manipulating task expectations to explore their influence on memory encoding and performance. Individual differences analysis revealed strong correlations in performance across tasks and expectations, indicating that both tasks rely on a shared underlying factor that varies between individuals. Additionally, participants who performed better in memory tasks also reported higher confidence, with significant correlations observed across all experimental conditions. These findings demonstrate that despite task-specific encoding differences, DE and CD tasks are underpinned by common cognitive mechanisms that drive individual differences in performance. This work highlights the importance of considering individual variability in visual working memory research and the influence of task type on memory strategies.

*Keywords: Working memory, individual differences, encoding, strategies.*

# HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY

## COOKING THERAPY TOOL FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING: A NEW METHOD TO FIND YOURSELF

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**Abstract**
The objective of Cooking Therapy protocol is to build a tool within the reach of children, adolescents, adults and the elderly who could rediscover well-being in the kitchen of their home. Combined with specific psychological techniques, it can be used by psychologists as a complementary therapy. Following studies and research in various fields of psychology combined with the skills acquired as a psychologist and psychotherapist of relational systemic training; sharing the theoretical assumptions and some techniques of Mindfulness in 2017 the Cooking Therapy protocol is developed. The protocol is based on the premise "I'm sick so I cook", which has now become "I cook to feel good". Through 7 main stages of preparation: fastening the apron, reading the recipe, weighing the ingredients, kneading, seasoning, decorating, sharing, Cooking Therapy acts on four dimensions of the person: physical, cognitive, social, intra-personal. Each session sees the participation of a small group, lasts 90 minutes and occurs twice a week. It sees the preparation of 5 basic recipes that will be modified to achieve specific objectives. The pandemic and the lockdown have changed the way of conducting and participating from face-to-face to online and later mixed, allowing the protocol to be known and used throughout Italy and other countries. From the growing demand, from the constant participation especially of children, from the attention paid by professionals to the protocol and training, we can deduce a sufficient interest useful to continue using the tool and to build protocols useful for the management of specific discomforts or disturbances.

*Keywords: Wellness, psychology, cooking therapy, mindfulness, health.*

## ONE SIMPLE QUESTION PREDICTS WELL-BEING IN RADIATION THERAPY: THE ROLE OF DESIRE FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVENTION AND PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT

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**Abstract**
Radiation therapy (RT) is a critical part of cancer treatment often accompanied by heightened anxiety, depression, and reduced life satisfaction. Although psycho-oncological (PO) interventions and social support can alleviate distress, it is unclear whether patients' desire for PO intervention reflects temporary or ongoing distress and whether all patients benefit from social support or only those seeking help. In this study we examined whether the desire for PO during the start of RT predicted anxiety, depression, and life satisfaction at the start and end of RT and whether perceived social support moderated these effects. One-hundred-and-forty-six patients completed questionnaires at three time-points (pre-treatment, first treatment, last treatment). Results showed that patients desiring PO intervention reported higher anxiety and depression at the start and end of RT. Higher perceived social support predicted lower depression and improved life satisfaction but only for patients expressing a desire for PO. Screening for psychological distress is standard in oncology but often limited by time and resources during RT. The current study findings suggest that a single, straightforward question at the start of RT could identify at-risk patients, enabling proactive intervention. Moreover, fostering perceptions of social support may help mitigate negative outcomes in the absence of professional intervention.

*Keywords: Anxiety, depression, life satisfaction, psycho-oncological intervention, social support, radiation therapy.*

# PERSONALITY TRAITS AND MENTALIZATION AMONG ADOLESCENTS AS PREDICTORS OF STRESS COPING STRATEGIES

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**Abstract**

Stress has many consequences for our well-being, both physically and psychologically. While stress helps us to overcome challenges and to achieve our goals, stress can also have many detrimental health consequences if it continues for a long time (Tollenaar, & Overgaauw, 2020). More knowledge is warranted about differential sensitivity to stressful situations to predict how people will respond to (socially) demanding contexts (Romić, & Ljubetić, 2021). The aim of the research was to examine whether personality traits (activity, aggressiveness/hostility, impulsive sensation seeking, neuroticism/anxiety, sociability) and mentalization (mentalization of self, mentalization of others, motivation for mentalization) can predict stress coping strategies (task-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, avoidance-focused coping) among emerging adults. The sample was convenient and consisted of 291 respondents ($N_{female}$ = 72.5%), high school students and students in Niš, Serbia. The ages of the respondents ranged from 18 to 24 years (M = 19.19 years, SD = 1.37). The following instruments were used to operationalize the aforementioned constructs: The ZKPQ questionnaire for measuring basic personality traits, UM mentalization scale and the Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations (CISS). For task-oriented coping with stress, the model explained 18% of the total variance. Significant predictors were activity ($\beta$ = .21, $t$ = 3.08, p = .002) and motivation for mentalization ($\beta$ = .29, $t$ = 3.42, p = .001). The model within emotion-focused coping explained 40% of the variance ($p < .001$), while the significant predictors were aggressiveness ($\beta$ = .16, $t$ = 2.92, p = .004), neuroticism ($\beta$ = .56, $t$ = 10.25, p < .001) and mentalization others ($\beta$ = .14, $t$ = 1.93, p = .050). For avoidance-oriented coping, the model explained 12% of the variance ($p < .001$). Significant predictors were impulsive sensation seeking ($\beta$ = .23, $t$ = 3.06, p = .002) and sociability ($\beta$ = .16, $t$ = 2.17, p = .031). Activity and the need to understand the needs and intentions of others contribute to constructive solutions in stressful situations. On the other side, neuroticism contributes to the greatest extent to the less desirable strategy of overcoming stress that is focused on emotions, which is logical because a disturbed person first tries to regulate emotions, and this does not necessarily lead to a constructive solution, but to the consumption of drugs, withdrawal or self-preoccupation. Considering that the tendency to neuroticism makes it difficult to successfully overcome stress, its regulation through counseling and therapeutic work can significantly contribute to better coping with stress.

*Keywords: Adolescence, personality traits, mentalization, stress coping strategies.*

# THE MEANINGS OF VERBAL MESSAGES ABOUT THE RISK OF SIDE EFFECTS

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**Abstract**

Cultural changes are reshaping the doctor-patient relationship, highlighting the importance of shared decision-making in treatment. This process requires physicians to present statistical data on treatment effectiveness and potential side effects. However, understanding numerical risk can be difficult for patients, often making verbal descriptors necessary. The way these labels are interpreted influences risk perception and treatment choices. This study explored how people perceive words describing the frequency of side effects and evaluated their unambiguity. A total of 175 participants assigned percentage values to 13 verbal labels and assessed their clarity. The results revealed how verbal labels were understood and perceived in terms of unambiguity. Discrepancies emerged between laypeople's interpretations and the official European Medicines Agency. These findings highlight the need for further research to improve risk communication in medical settings.

*Keywords: Risk perception, shared decision-making, side effects, verbal labels.*

# Virtual Presentations
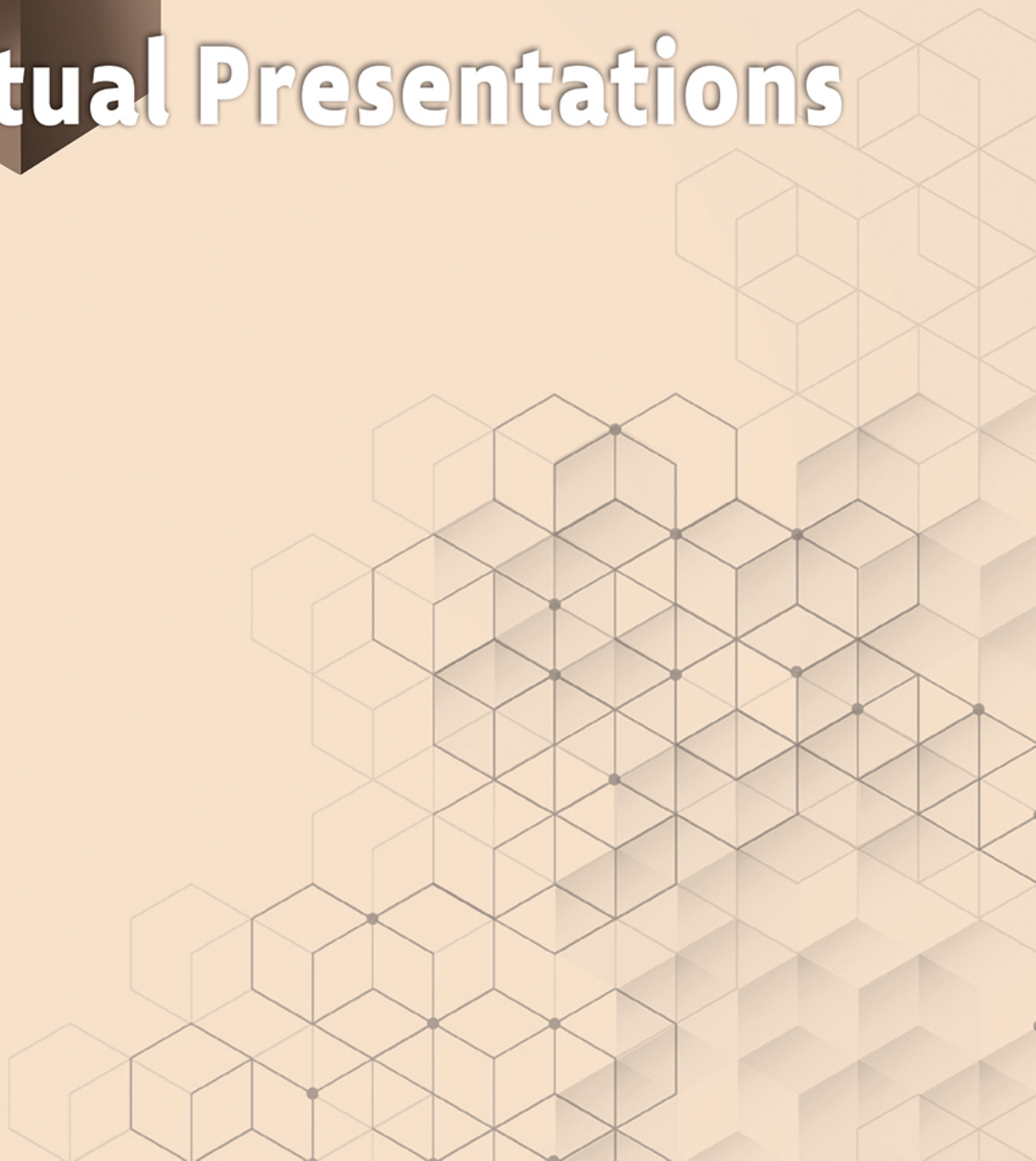
# CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

## ADVANTAGES, CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE INTEGRATION OF FACE-TO-FACE AND ONLINE SCHOOL COUNSELLING

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**Abstract**
Evidence for the advantages of online counselling for mental health was found before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. During the outbreak of the epidemic, which required social distancing, mental health service providers were required to convert their face-to-face service to online. Educational counsellors also did this in schools. However, the challenges documented in the provision of online counselling raise the question of whether the integration of digital tools in school counselling continued after the return to routine at school and the removal of the restrictions on social distancing. It is essential to examine this issue to deepen the understanding of the possibility of combining traditional school counselling with online counselling, how it is done, what advantages it has and what challenges it poses. Therefore, the current study examined how school counsellors combine and integrate their online counselling experience with face-to-face school counselling. Using a qualitative approach, participants in the study were nineteen school counsellors, all women working in middle or high schools (mean age was 44.22 years). Following semi-structured interviews, results revealed five main themes: 1. The advantages of combining face-to-face and online counselling to promote trust and commitment in the counselling relationship; 2. Tools to strengthen the counselling process through empathy with digital tools in online counselling, 3. Existing challenges in online counselling in the school system, 4. A strategy for optimally combining face-to-face counselling with online counselling. The research findings point to the advantages of combining counselling in its traditional form with the technological one, not only in crises. At the same time, the presented challenges oblige the education system and the decision-makers to formulate a systematic program for the purpose of training school counsellors, formulating adopted rules of ethics and regulating the boundaries of the school counselling position.

*Keywords: School counselling, online counselling, qualitative research.*

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DARK TRIAD, ATTACHMENT STYLES AND DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS: LAWYER SAMPLE

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**Abstract**
This cross-sectional study examines the relationship between attachment styles (avoidant and anxious), the Dark Triad (Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy), and depressive symptoms among Turkish lawyers aged 22–65. The sample is being collected via snowball sampling through online channels. Participants complete a sociodemographic form, the Experiences in Close Relationships Inventory, the Abbreviated Dark Triad Scale, and the Beck Depression Scale via Survey. Data collection is ongoing, and analysis will be conducted using SPSS 21. Findings indicate that Dark Triad traits predict each other, with professional satisfaction also playing a role, while attachment styles and depression do not predict Dark Triad traits. Given that lawyers frequently interact with perpetrators and victims, their psychological resilience, depressive tendencies, and relationship attitudes may be influenced. Understanding these dynamics could contribute to the literature.

*Keywords: Dark triad, attachment styles, depression, forensic psychology, criminology.*

# SELF-MEANING BASED THERAPY: AN INTEGRATIVE MODEL OF PSYCHOTHERAPY

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**Abstract**
Described as groundbreaking, transformative, innovative, and pioneering with great integrative reach, the heart of Self-Meaning Based Therapy (SMBT) is the uncovering of one's core negative Self-Meaning (SM), which lies deeply within the unconscious. SMBT is an approach to psychotherapy based firmly on the understanding that we are inherently relational, meaning-making beings, and that difficult to traumatic events shape our primary experiences of connection within ourselves, with others, and with the world. Such experiences leave us with the need to make sense of *why*. This *why* takes primary form in a negative, core self-definition, or SM. While primitively functional, it becomes an internalized relational template that can unconsciously wreak havoc on one's life across time. The subjective phenomenology of one's SM tends to remain out of day-to-day awareness, sometimes wholly, until activated. While we are able to consciously name our SM, we are unable to heal it consciously. Conventional methods of talk therapy are therefore insufficient toward this end. Our SMBT method is designed to allow direct access to the lived experience of our SM where it can be reworked and transformed. This paper introduces SMBT, its model and method, as well as its capacity to emancipate those we work with in therapy toward a newly realized psychological freedom.

*Keywords: Self-meaning, unconscious, phenomenology, bilateral stimulation, freedom.*

# NATURAL DISASTERS, PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA AND OBSESSIVE BELIEFS AND SYMPTOMS

**Sevgi Guney**
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**Abstract**
Psychological trauma arises from experiences that threaten individuals' lives, plunge them into chaos, and disrupt their intellectual, emotional, and behavioral stability. Following disasters, some survivors may develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) along with comorbid disorders such as OCD. The intense uncertainty stemming from psychological trauma can sometimes lead to obsessive beliefs. These obsessive beliefs play a crucial role in interpreting traumatic experiences from earthquakes and can effectively transform experienced issues into obsessive-compulsive disorder. This study aims to provide insights into the traumatic reactions experienced after the earthquake that struck the Southeastern Anatolia region of Turkey on February 6, 2023, which impacted 11 provinces and resulted in significant loss of life and property. A total of 300 earthquake survivors, 162 females & 138 males participated, with a range age of 18 – 65; $\overline{X}$=29.8 ± 9.28. All assessments were conducted face-to-face. The research employed several measures: the PTSD Checklist Civilian Version (PCL), the PADUA Inventory – Washington State University Revision of Obsessions and Compulsions (PI-WSUR), and the Obsessive Beliefs Questionnaire (OBQ). The results indicated that seeking reassurance and intolerance of uncertainty leads to numerous obsessive beliefs and compulsions, particularly in scenarios involving exposure. Linear regression analysis indicated that issues arising after experiencing trauma predicted obsessive beliefs, with a statistical significance level of ($\beta$ = .160, $p$ < .000). Additionally, the analysis of Chi-square ($X^2$) revealed a statistically significant correlation between the PTSD Checklist (PCL) and the PADUA Inventory-Washington State University Revision of Obsessions and Compulsions. The results are discussed to shed light on future research on the comorbidity of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and PTSD.

*Keywords: Disaster, obsessive beliefs, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), PTSD, trauma.*

# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DARK TRIAD, ATTACHMENT STYLES AND DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS: MEDICAL DOCTOR SAMPLE

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**Abstract**
The aim of this cross-sectional study is to examine the relationship between attachment styles (avoidant and anxious attachment), Dark Triad (Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy), and depressive symptoms of medical doctors between the ages of 22-65 working in Turkey. The sociodemographic form, Experiences in Close Relationships Inventory, Abbreviated Dark Triad Scale, and Beck Depression Inventory prepared by the researchers were used in the study. The sample group was reached using the snowball sampling method and through online channels. A total of 77 medical doctors were reached. After the data collection phase is completed, statistical analysis will be performed with the SPSS 21 package program. Within the scope of the research, Independent Samples t Test and Mann-Whitney U test were used to determine the significance of the difference between two variables. The relationships between the independent and dependent variables of the study were examined with Pearson and Spearman Correlation Analysis and Linear Regression Analysis. It was examined whether there were any differences in attachment styles and depression according to the doctors' areas of specialization (surgeon and non-surgeon). In the study, it was observed that the total mean scores of the dark triad traits, Machiavellianism and psychopathy of doctors specializing in surgery were significantly higher than those of non-surgeons. Significant and moderate positive correlations were observed between anxious attachment and avoidant attachment scores and depression.

*Keywords: Dark triad, attachment styles, depression, medical doctors, surgeons.*

# MENTAL HEALTH PREVENTION AND UNEMPLOYMENT: WHAT DEMANDS EMERGE FROM THE MAIN STAKEHOLDERS?

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**Abstract**
*Introduction*: Unemployment impacts mental health through various factors. At the same time, deteriorating mental health negatively affects reemployment chances. Mental health prevention is highly recommended for this fragilized populations by the World Health Organization (WHO) (Organisation mondiale de la santé, 2012). Recommendations on such actions are formulated by the literature (e.g.: Bartholomew et al., 1998; D'Amours et al., 2008). Implementation's quality, which includes adapting the intervention with the needs and desires of the target population is advised. Yet, no study has been done on the interests of unemployed people regarding preventive action targeting mental health. *Methodology*: 13 jobseekers were interviewed with a semi-structured interview about their experiences with unemployment and their wishes regarding mental health prevention. A thematic analysis was carried out using Nvivo 14 software and Braun and Clarke's (2006) methodology. *Results*: Half of the participants expressed interest in participating in such a prevention initiative. Five main themes were identified, each comprising 2 to 5 sub-themes. The participants were particularly interested in discussions about their experiences addressing psychological difficulties, social and economic counseling, professional reinsertion and socialization. Additionally, they provided recommendations on the structure, logistics, animation and group composition for mental health prevention initiatives. *Conclusion*: Unemployed individuals are impacted by their situation and seek mental health prevention actions tailored to their needs. They are invested in proposing topics and organizational advice for such initiatives. This work provides the foundation for developing more effective prevention actions for unemployed individuals and better their implementation.

*Keywords: Unemployment, prevention, mental health, reintegration.*

# ATTACHMENT STYLES AND SUICIDE RISK: THE EFFECTS OF NEUROTICISM AND MALADAPTIVE DAYDREAMING

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**Abstract**
Suicide remains a significant public health concern, necessitating a deeper understanding of the psychological factors contributing to suicidal ideation and behavior. Attachment theory posits that early relationships with caregivers shape emotional and behavioral responses throughout life, influencing interpersonal relationships and mental health. Neuroticism, characterized by heightened emotional instability and negative affectivity, has been linked to various mental health outcomes, including suicidal behavior. Similarly, maladaptive daydreaming (MD), marked by excessive fantasy and escapism, may exacerbate feelings of isolation and despair. This study thus aimed to examine whether neuroticism and MD play a sequential mediating role in the relationship between attachment styles (AS) and suicide risk (SR). In this study, 1152 young adults (50% women) aged 18 to 25 years (M=21.48, SD=2.31) engaged in an online survey and completed self-report questionnaires assessing their AS, neuroticism, MD, and SR. The analysis utilized hybrid structural equation modeling (SEM) to test for mediation effects. Four models were tested, one for each AS: secure (SA), dismissing (DA), preoccupied (PA), and fearful (FA). The models showed a good fit. Specifically, SA model: $\chi2(36)=237.73$; $p<.001$, CFI=.97, RMSEA=.07 (90% CI=.06–.08), SRMR=.04; DA model: $\chi2(36)=230.52$; $p<.001$, CFI=.97, RMSEA=.07 (90% CI=.06–.08), SRMR=.04; PA model: $\chi2(36)=233.01$; $p<.001$, CFI=.97, RMSEA=.07 (90% CI=.06–.08), SRMR=.04; FA model: $\chi2(36)=226.52$; $p<.001$, CFI=.97, RMSEA=.07 (90% CI=.06–.08), SRMR=.04. The findings indicated that SA did not exhibit a direct relationship with SR; however, it was linked to SR through the mediating influence of neuroticism. Conversely, DA showed no significant correlations with the other variables. The relationship between PA and SR was fully mediated by neuroticism and MD, while the association between FA and SR was partially mediated by these factors. All the other paths were statistically significant. The findings suggest that targeting neuroticism and MD may be crucial for reducing SR, particularly among individuals with certain AS. Additionally, the results highlight the need for personalized interventions tailored to specific AS, as different AS may be more strongly linked to specific negative outcomes compared to others. By tailoring strategies to address specific AS and specific factors such as neuroticism and MD, practitioners can thus better target the root causes of suicide risk.

*Keywords: Attachment styles, neuroticism, maladaptive daydreaming, suicide risk, young adults.*

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# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DARK TRIAD, ANXIETY AND COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS AMONG ACADEMICIAN IN TURKEY

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*[2]Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakıf University, Psychology Department (Turkey)*

**Abstract**
The present study aims to investigate the relationship between the Dark Triad, cognitive distortions, and anxiety among academics in Turkey, and to compare these relationships based on certain demographic variables. Data were collected from 95 participants using the Sociodemographic Information Form, the Short Dark Triad Scale, the Cognitive Distortions Scale, and the Beck Anxiety Inventory. Notable findings include the significant results of catastrophizing in many analyses and the lower levels of Machiavellianism among individuals with higher academic titles. Catastrophizing has shown significant differences in many analyses. Academicians with the title of Associate Professor are more disadvantaged in terms of cognitive distortions compared to other academicians. In the analyses related to the Dark Triad personality traits, only Machiavellianism yielded significant results. These findings have been discussed in light of the literature.

*Keywords: Dark Triad, cognitive distortions, anxiety, academicians in Turkey.*

# EMOTIONAL ABUSE AND GENERAL DISTRESS IN INDIVIDUALS WITH MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS: THE MEDIATION ROLE OF INTERNALIZED SHAME AND CHRONIC ILLNESS STIGMA

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**Abstract**
*Background*: Multiple sclerosis (MS) is an autoimmune disease that affects the central nervous system, causing a wide range of physical and cognitive symptoms, including movement difficulties, fatigue, and cognitive impairments. Research shows that individuals with MS experience higher levels of trauma than the general population. A specific form of trauma, such as Childhood Emotional Abuse (CEA), can lead to anxiety, depression, and stress. It can also foster maladaptive beliefs, like a sense of unworthiness and wrongdoing, which contribute to the development of shame. Additionally, CEA can make individuals more vulnerable to Chronic Illness Stigma due to feelings of inadequacy associated with past abuse. Research has found that emotional abuse can impair emotional regulation, making individuals more susceptible to Internalized Shame and Chronic Illness Stigma, which in turn can worsen their ability to cope with MS, leading to increased General Distress. *Objective*: This study aimed to assess whether Internalized Shame and Illness Stigma mediate the relationship between Emotional Abuse and General Distress. *Method*: A sample of 171 individuals with MS, aged 19 to 65 years (M = 34.04; SD = 10.01), were recruited via social media and completed an online survey. Structural equation modeling (SEM) with latent variables was used to test a model where Emotional Abuse was the predictor, Internalized Shame and Chronic Illness Stigma were mediators, and General Distress was the outcome. *Results*: The model showed good fit indices: $\chi^2(49) = 89.81$, $p < .001$; CFI = .97, RMSEA = .07 (90% CI = .05–.09), SRMR = .08. Significant paths were found from Emotional Abuse to Internalized Shame ($\beta = .42$) and Chronic Illness Stigma ($\beta = .32$). Significant paths were also found from Internalized Shame ($\beta = .83$) and Chronic Illness Stigma ($\beta = .14$) to General Distress. A non-significant path was found from Emotional Abuse to General Distress ($\beta = .03$). However, statistically significant indirect effects of Emotional Abuse on General Distress via Internalized Shame ($\beta = .34$) and Chronic Illness Stigma ($\beta = .05$) were detected. *Conclusions*: The results indicate that Internalized Shame and Chronic Illness Stigma mediate the relationship between Emotional Abuse and General Distress. Individuals who experience feelings of inadequacy and self-isolation are less likely to seek emotional support or help with daily tasks, which may contribute to distress. These findings highlight the importance of addressing Internalized Shame and Illness Stigma in treatment to improve distressing states in individuals with MS.

*Keywords: Emotional abuse, internalized shame, chronic illness stigma, general distress.*

# YOUNG ADULTS' PRACTICES IN SEEKING ONLINE PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT

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[2]*Faculty of Political Science, University of Belgrade (Serbia)*

**Abstract**
In recent years, young adults have increasingly turned to online resources for psychological support, yet research on this widespread phenomenon remains scarce in Serbia. To address this gap, a quantitative cross-sectional study was conducted to explore the characteristics of internet use for accessing Online Psychological Support (OPS) among young adults (N = 379; ages 18–25; 63.2% women, 36.8% men), focusing on reasons to seek support, life domains, online resources, forms, and adverse experiences. Data were gathered through an anonymous online questionnaire via Google Forms and analysed using descriptive statistics and chi-square tests in SPSS 21. The results show that almost half of the respondents (46.2%) use OPS, with women engaging in it more frequently than men. Young adults primarily seek OPS for information on psychological symptoms and ways to cope with them (69.4%), for personal growth in the absence of acute difficulties (42.9%), and for managing immediate psychological issues (40.3%). Major life domains for which OPS is sought include education/work (51.1%), personal growth (48.0%), and

intimate relationships (46.6%). Respondents most frequently use search engines (74.5%), podcasts (55.2%), and YouTube (52.4%) for support, while formal online counselling and psychotherapy are rarely used (2.8%). Regarding the forms of OPS used, respondents most commonly engage with informational videos and texts (56.3%) and the practice of sharing experiences (46.5%). Most participants (68.9%) had no adverse experiences with OPS, although some encountered unprofessional or unreliable information. By highlighting current practices and potential challenges, this study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the use of OPS among young adults in Serbia.

*Keywords: Internet psychological support, purposes, life domains, resources, adverse experiences.*

# FAMILY FUNCTIONING AND DYADIC RELATIONSHIP IN MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS: PRELIMINARY DATA OF AN ITALIAN MULTICENTER STUDY

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**Marinella Clerico[2], Lorys Castelli[1], & Valentina Tesio[1]**
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**Abstract**
*Introduction:* Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a chronic inflammatory and neurodegenerative disease which not only affects physical functioning but is also associated with cognitive impairments and psychological distress. The combination of these symptoms can have a negative consequence on the family functioning (FF) of people living with MS (PwMS), with detrimental effects on couples and their dyadic relationships. In addition, the quality of relationships could be influenced by other factors, such as specific individual characteristics (such as high levels of alexithymia) or social support. For these reasons, we assessed the FF and the quality of dyadic relationships of PwMS and their partners. Specifically, we aimed to investigate the relationships between alexithymia, psychological distress (anxiety and depressive symptoms), perceived social support, dyadic relationships and FF. *Methods:* Couples, consisting of PwMS and their respective partners, recruited from several Italian MS centers, were invited to complete an online survey. Measures included: the Brief Family Assessment Measure 3 (FAM3) to assess FF; the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS) for psychological distress symptoms; the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) for social support; the Toronto Alexithymia Scale (TAS-20) for alexithymia; the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) for the quality of dyadic relationships. *Results:* In the present study, we analyzed data from 28 couples including 16 women and 12 men with MS and their partners (mean age: 46 years). A statistically significant correlation was found between the DAS scores ($r=.496$, $p<.007$), while no correlation was found between the FAM3 scores of the PwMS and the partner. The FAM3 scores of the PwMS were significantly correlated with the DAS ($r=-.643$, $p<.01$), MSPSS ($r=-.624$, $p<.01$) and TAS-20 scores ($r=.424$, $p<.025$) as well as with the HADS-Depression scores ($r=.493$, $p<.008$) and MPSS scores ($r=-.447$, $p<.017$) of the partners. The partner's FAM3 scores was significantly correlated with his/her level of anxiety (HADS-Anxiety $r=.558$, $p<.002$) and depression scores (HADS-Depression $r=.844$, $p<.01$), with the TAS-20 ($r=.466$, $p<.012$), the MSPSS ($r=-.562$, $p<.002$) and the DAS scores ($r=-.451$, $p<.016$). *Discussion:* Overall, data show that couples do not rate the quality of the FF equally but agree on the quality of the dyadic relationship. Interestingly, partners' psychological distress influenced both patients' and partners' perceptions of FF, suggesting that special attention should be paid to this aspect in clinical practice, as it could be a crucial factor for both partners.

*Keywords: Family functioning, dyadic relationship, multiple sclerosis, psychological distress, perceived social support.*

# THE MEDIATING ROLE OF PAIN CATASTROPHIZING IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ALEXITHYMIA AND GENERAL DISTRESS IN WOMEN WITH FIBROMYALGIA

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## Abstract

*Background*: Fibromyalgia syndrome (FMS) is a non-inflammatory rheumatic disease characterized by chronic widespread pain, often accompanied by symptoms such as fatigue, sleep disturbances, memory loss, and mood swings. FMS has been shown to affect women more frequently, and psychological factors appear to play an important role in the management and perception of pain. In fact, some research has found higher alexithymia scores in individuals with fibromyalgia compared to controls. Additionally, alexithymia appears to play an important role in FMS, as the inability to recognize one's emotional states adequately can lead to difficulties in processing psychological stress, which then manifests through physical symptoms such as chronic pain. Furthermore, difficulty in regulating one's emotional states can promote the tendency to focus obsessively on the pain (rumination), elaborate negative thoughts such as the belief that the pain is unbearable or will inevitably worsen (magnification), and fuel the perception of being incapable of coping with and managing the pain (helplessness). Rumination, magnification, and helplessness are the three key characteristics of pain catastrophizing and can promote an increase in anxiety, depression, and stress (general distress). *Objective:* This study aimed to assess whether pain catastrophizing mediates the relationship between alexithymia and general distress. *Method:* A sample of 417 women with FMS, aged 21 to 77 years (M = 44.70; SD = 12.24), was recruited via social media and completed an online survey. Structural equation modeling (SEM) with latent variables was used to test a model where alexithymia was the predictor, pain catastrophizing was the mediator, and general distress was the outcome. *Results*: The model showed acceptable fit indices: $\chi^2(24) = 114.41$, p < .001; CFI = .95, RMSEA = .09 (90% CI = .08–.11), SRMR = .05. Significant paths were found from alexithymia to pain catastrophizing ($\beta$ = .32). Significant paths were also found from pain catastrophizing to general distress ($\beta$ = .83). Moreover, a statistically significant indirect effect from alexithymia to general distress via pain catastrophizing ($\beta$ = .34) was found. *Conclusions*: The results indicate that pain catastrophizing mediates the relationship between alexithymia and general distress. These findings suggest the importance of structuring interventions aimed at reducing levels of alexithymia and pain catastrophizing to decrease general distress and improve the quality of life for individuals with fibromyalgia.

*Keywords: Alexithymia, pain catastrophizing, general distress, fibromyalgia.*

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# DRUG ADDICTION AS RISK FOR SUICIDE ATTEMPTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC. CASE STUDY AT CAROLINA CENTER FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH, PSYCHIATRIC RESIDENTIAL HOSPITAL IN SOUTH CAROLINA, UNITED STATES

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## Abstract

*Background:* Suicide is closely linked to the substances use. Therefore, it is very important to confirm the factors that affect the possibility of suicidal behavior. The research was conducted in the year 2020, during the internship certification period for Counselor on Addicts, conducted in the Carolina Center for Behavioral Health, Greer, SC, overlapping period and with the effects of the crisis caused by the covid-19 pandemic. *Methods:* The survey included 200 respondents, all subjects in the facility; 100 heroin addicts on the substitution program that attempted suicide and 100 opiate addicts who have not attempted suicide. The evaluation included a questionnaire with socio-demographic, hereditary and addiction data, legal problems and then the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory–MMPI-2. Of the 100 addicts who tried to commit suicide, an attempt was made to apply the Scale for Assessment of Lethality of Suicide Attempt (SALSA), but with low response rates. *Results:* The results showed a statistically significant difference

compared to the personality structure, especially pronounced in hypersensitive structures, in relation to the duration of addictive experience and duration of heroin by intravenous route, as well as in relation to the presence of psychotic disorders, drug abuse and suicidal behavior in the family. *Conclusion:* As risk factors among opiate addicts are identified interfered biological and psychological factors and the effects of the substances themselves.

*Keywords: Drug, addiction, suicidal risk, prevention, therapeutic program.*

# HEALTH-RELATED QUALITY OF LIFE IN RECTAL CANCER PATIENTS DURING ACTIVE TREATMENT

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**Abstract**
*Objective:* The aim of this exploratory prospective observational study was to evaluate changes in Health-related Quality of Life (HRQoL) in rectal cancer patients (RCPs) during active cancer treatment, i.e., after diagnosis, after preoperative (chemo)radiotherapy and after surgical resection. Furthermore, the study aims to investigate which physical and psychosocial factors better predict HRQoL in the different treatment phases. Deepening the understanding of the positive and negative predictive factors for patients' HRQoL at different phases could indeed improve screening programs for early detection and intervention. *Methods:* 43 RCPs, expected to be treated with preoperative (chemo)radiation and surgery, were enrolled after diagnosis and assessed at three different time points: diagnosis (T0), one month after the end of preoperative treatment (T1), and one month after resection surgery (T2). HRQoL (European Organization for Research and Treatment of Cancer Quality of Life Questionnaire, EORTC-QLQ-C30 and its disease-specific supplementary, the QLQ-CR29), psychological distress (Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale, HADS), coping (Mini-Mental Adjustment to Cancer Scale, Mini-MAC), affectivity (Positive and Negative Affect Scale, PANAS), alexithymia (Toronto Alexithymia Scale, TAS-20) and social support (Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support Scale, MSPSS) were evaluate at the different time points. *Results:* The data showed that HRQoL decreased over time, especially between T1 and T2 ($p=.005$). Over time, patients' body image ($p<.001$) and urinary ($p<.001$), mouth ($p=.015$) and sexual ($p<.001$) symptoms worsened. Health anxiety ($p<.001$) and negative affectivity state ($p=.037$) improved after preoperative treatment, as did psychological distress ($p<.001$), although this increased again at T2 ($p=.003$). Baseline intestinal symptoms ($p<.001$) and negative affectivity trait ($p=.03$) were found to be significant predictors of HRQoL at T0. Baseline pain ($p<.001$), intestinal ($p=.003$) and urinary ($p=.009$) symptoms at T1 significantly predicted HRQoL at T1. Finally, a fatalistic coping style at T1 ($p=.013$), psychological distress ($p=.003$) and mouth symptoms ($p=.001$) at T2 significantly predicted HRQoL at T2. *Conclusion:* Our results suggest that several physical and psychological factors are involved in the changes occurring after diagnosis in RCPs' HRQoL, which decreases during active treatments. These data emphasise the importance of active screening, early diagnosis, and preventive psychological interventions immediately after diagnosis to improve HRQoL and psychological health outcomes.

*Keywords: Colorectal cancer, longitudinal study, active treatment, psychological distress, quality of life.*

# FROM SURGICAL TO COMPREHENSIVE CARE: THE RECONFIGURATION OF TRANSGENDER HEALTHCARE IN A UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL OF THE BRAZILIAN UNIFIED HEALTH SYSTEM (SUS)

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**Abstract**
The Brazilian Unified Health System (SUS) is the public health system in Brazil, established in 1990 and based on the principles of Universality, Comprehensiveness, and Equity. This model ensures free access to healthcare for the entire population, promoting comprehensive care and prioritizing investments in areas with greater needs, aiming to reduce social inequalities through inclusive policies. In this oral presentation, we will discuss a Specialized Outpatient Service in a University Hospital in Rio de Janeiro, which has become a reference in transgender healthcare. The service marks a transition from an exclusively surgical model to a comprehensive and interdisciplinary model. Initially focused on gender-affirming surgeries, in accordance with the Federal Medical Council Resolution (CFM) Nº 1.482/1997, the service was restructured following Ordinance Nº 2.803/2013, which expanded the Transsexualization Process. It now offers outpatient care through a multidisciplinary team, including specialists in Psychology, Psychiatry, Endocrinology, Dermatology, Urology, Nutrition, Physical Education, Social Work, Nursing, among others. This transformation fosters humanized care, recognizing gender diversity as an integral part of human diversity. Transgender identity, as a gender identity, reveals the constitutive aspects of the subject from the very first appointments. In the clinical context, we observe the impacts of transphobia, which delegitimizes existences and directly affects mental health. Many users report that these initial appointments are their first opportunity to talk about themselves and their gender affirmation process. The difficulty in accessing specialized public services and the urgent need for attentive listening make these encounters intense and transformative. This presentation will also share preliminary findings from research conducted in the service, offering an overview of the profile of the population served and their main mental health demands. These data guide more effective care strategies, considering the singularities of each individual. Our care model is biopsychosocial and depathologizing, avoiding reducing the experiences of the transgender population to a single aspect of their identity. Finally, we will emphasize the importance of promoting inclusive and diversity-sensitive public policies, as well as expanding discussions on gender issues in institutions that ensure citizenship and dignified health conditions, fostering humanized care.

*Keywords: Transgender health, Unified Health System, transsexualization process, mental health, inclusion.*

# PSYCHOMETRIC PROPERTIES OF THE TURKISH VERSION OF THE PERCEIVED INVALIDATION OF EMOTION SCALE

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**Abstract**
Zielinski and Veilleux (2018) developed the Perceived Invalidation of Emotions Scale (PIES) to measure people's perceptions of ignored or invalidated emotion sharing. Since there is no instrument assessing emotion invalidation for the Turkish sample, this study aimed to examine the psychometric properties of the scale and adapt it into Turkish. *Method:* The original scale was first translated into Turkish and then back into the original language. 390 adults aged 18-65 years participated in the study. Participants were given Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ), the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale-Short Form (DERS-16), the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), the Psychological Vulnerability Scale (PVS), the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI), and the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) to check for criterion-related validity. *Results:* The confirmatory factor analysis revealed that the obtained values were acceptable. As a result of the correlation analyses conducted to determine the criterion-related validity of the PIES, it was revealed that there were positive, low-medium significant relationships with the PIES. According to the results of the study, Cronbach's alpha coefficients of PIES were found to be 0.86, respectively. *Conclusion:* The findings of the present study show that the Turkish version of PIES is a reliable and valid measurement tool.

*Keywords: Invalidation, emotion, reliability, validity.*

# FREQUENCY, ADVANTAGES, DRAWBACKS AND GENDER DIFFERENCES IN SEEKING PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT IN-PERSON AND ONLINE

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**Abstract**
This study examines how young adults engage with in-person psychological support (IPS) and online psychological support (OPS), with a particular focus on the frequency of use, perceived benefits, reasons for avoidance, and potential gender differences. A quantitative cross-sectional design was employed, and 379 participants (aged 18–25) completed a self-report questionnaire assessing various dimensions of help-seeking behaviour. Descriptive statistics and the chi-square test were used for data analysis. Findings reveal that IPS is used more frequently (58.8%) than OPS (46.2%), with women more likely than men to seek both forms of support. Regarding IPS, participants most frequently turn to friends and parents, while formal professional assistance, such as psychotherapists or psychologists, is considerably less common. The main perceived advantages of IPS include richer verbal and nonverbal communication, an easier assessment of sincerity, and deeper emotional connection—women value this last aspect more strongly than men. The most prominent reasons for avoiding IPS are the difficulty of opening up emotionally to people in person and the cost of professional support. OPS users most frequently cite free access, faster availability, and anonymity as key advantages. However, doubts about the credibility of online sources and a preference for independent problem-solving limit its broader usage. Men, in particular, report a greater tendency to "endure life" without informal or professional help. Interestingly, more participants report having sought support when responding to specific questions about their experience, suggesting that actual usage rates may exceed initial self-reports. Study findings highlight the coexisting roles of IPS and OPS in the help-seeking behaviours of young adults, underscoring the influence of gender, cultural context, and perceived practical barriers on their choices.

*Keywords: Young adults, in-person psychological support, online psychological support, internet, gender.*

# AGE-RELATED CHANGES IN THE STRUCTURE OF AUTISM SYMPTOMS IN CHILDREN WITH ASD FROM 3-4 TO 5-7 YEARS OLD

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**Abstract**
The aim of the current study was to detect age-related changes in the structure of autism symptoms in preschoolers. In 2020-2022 we examined 383 3-4-year-old children with ASD and in 2023-2024 – 528 5-7-year-old children with ASD. The research used 2 online questionnaires, developed and verified earlier for the purposes of the ongoing study, one containing 434 binary items (1-yes, 2-no) for 3-4-year–olds, the other consisting of 330 binary items for 5-7-year-olds. Data collection and filling out these questionnaires was carried out by specialists (psychologists, speech pathologists) of counseling centers, specialized and mass preschool institutions working with children on a regular basis (in counseling mode). The data were collected for children who had already been diagnosed with ASD prior to the current study. The materials, methods and procedures for data collection are detailed in our previous publications. Analysis of data of 3-4-year-old children with ASD, using confirmatory factor analysis (CFI), including multigroup CFI, revealed a stable 7-factor structure in different parts of the sample, including the following factors: 1) "Persistance on Sameness" (PS); 2) "Emotional disregulation" (ED); 3) "Alienation" (Al); 4) "Speech understanding" (SU); 5) "Disinhibition/hyperactivity" (Hyp); 6) "Echolalia" (Ech); 7) "Sensory desintegration" (SD). The factors form 3 independent, unrelated groups of symptoms: 1) Communication disorders (ED, SU, Ech, Al); 2) Sensory disintegration (PS, SD); 3) Hyperactivity/disinhibition. A similar analysis of data of 5-7-year-olds revealed an equally stable 8-factor structure similar to that for 3-4-year-olds, but instead of the Alienation factor (Al), 2 new factors appeared: impaired Empathy (Emp) and Motor skills (Mot) (Nasledov et al., 2023, 2024a). Just like in 3-4-year-old children, these 8 factors formed 3 groups of symptoms (secondary factors): 1) Communication disorders (SU, ED, Emp); 2) Sensory disintegration (SD, PS, Ech); 3) Praxis impairment (Hyp, Mot). For 5-7-year-olds, unlike for 3-4-year-olds, the secondarily factors significantly overlap, forming a complex interdependent system. Thus, praxis impairment, including symptoms of hyperactivity/disinhibition and motor delay, begin to increase emotional disorders and lack of empathy, which are closely related to speech understanding. On the other hand, it was found that praxis impairment begins to be associated with symptoms of sensory disintegration. Apparently, for older preschoolers, the symptoms of speech and motor disorders are key and determine the further educational route.

*Keywords: Autism, preschoolers, autism symptoms, age-related changes.*

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# THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PARENTAL PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTROL, DARK TRIAD TRAITS, CYBERBULLYING AND CYBERVICTIMIZATION

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**Abstract**
The increasing prevalence of cyberbullying among young adults is a pressing issue that has drawn significant attention in academic literature. Studies have indicated that individuals who experience high levels of parental psychological control, characterized by manipulative behaviors that undermine a child's emotional autonomy, are more likely to develop maladaptive personality traits. The Dark Triad, which encompasses Machiavellianism, psychopathy, and narcissism, has been shown to correlate with antisocial behaviors, including bullying. The current study thus seeks to explore the role of Dark Triad traits as mediators between parental psychological control (from both mothers and fathers) and the likelihood of cyberbullying and cybervictimization. In this study, 1016 young adults (50% women) aged 18 to 25 years (M=21.64, SD=2.22) participated in an online survey, providing self-reported information on their experiences with parental psychological control, their Dark Triad trait levels, and their involvement in cyberbullying and cybervictimization. The analysis utilized latent variable structural equation modeling (SEM) to test for mediation effects. The model showed a good fit: $\chi2(182)=561.69$, $p<.001$, CFI=.97,

RMSEA=.05 (90% CI=.04–.05), SRMR=.04. Maternal psychological control (MPC) is linked to an increase in Machiavellianism, psychopathy, narcissism and cybervictimization, but it does not directly contribute to cyberbullying. Paternal psychological control (PPC) similarly influences Machiavellianism, psychopathy, and narcissism and is associated with both cyberbullying and cybervictimization. Among the Dark Triad traits, Machiavellianism and psychopathy are significant predictors of both cyberbullying and cybervictimization, while narcissism has a negative impact on both behaviors. Indirectly, MPC contributes to cyberbullying and cybervictimization through Machiavellianism and psychopathy. PPC also has indirect positive effects on cyberbullying and cybervictimization via these traits. Conversely, narcissism serves as a negative mediator, suggesting that higher levels of MPC and PPC may decrease the likelihood of engaging in cyberbullying and experiencing cybervictimization when mediated by narcissism. Overall, the study suggests that young adults who experience greater parental psychological control are more likely to develop manipulative and unempathic traits, increasing their risk for both perpetrating and experiencing cyberbullying. Specifically, the results highlight the importance of considering both the direct and indirect pathways through which parental influence affects young adults' online behaviors. Consequently, effective measures should address not only the individual but also family dynamics, peer relationships, and the specific challenges of online environments to reduce the risks linked to these detrimental behaviors.

*Keywords: Parental psychological control, dark triad traits, cyberbullying, cybervictimization, young adults.*

# DESIRE FOR FAME AND PSYCHOLOGICAL MALADJUSTMENT: MODERATED MEDIATION OF SOCIAL COMPARISON BY SELF-DISCREPANCY

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**Abstract**
The desire for fame, which refers to the desire to be widely recognized by an unspecified majority, has emerged as a global phenomenon among younger generations. In today's context, the desire for fame is characterized by the pursuit of attention, recognition from others, or economic gain, and based on self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), such externally driven motivations are associated with psychological maladjustment. Media reports and articles have highlighted that many young people who aspire to achieve celebrity status experience appearance-related obsessions and feelings of inferiority due to comparisons with their peers or celebrities. The present study aimed to examine the psychological impact of the desire for fame, hypothesizing that it influences psychological maladjustment (depression and anxiety) through the mediating role of social comparison. In addition, based on the premise that fame is an idealistic and challenging goal, it was predicted that when the gap between the actual and ideal selves is large, the effect of social comparison on psychological maladjustment would be amplified. The survey was conducted among 316 general Korean adults (49.7% men, mean age 27.74 years), and Hayes' (2002) PROCESS Macro Model 14 was used to examine a moderated mediation model. Bootstrapping (Shrout & Bolger, 2002) was used to examine the mediating and moderating effects, and simple slope analysis was used to examine the moderating effect. The results indicated that the influence of the desire for fame on psychological maladjustment, mediated by social comparison, was significantly moderated by levels of self-discrepancy. Specifically, higher levels of self-discrepancy were found to intensify the relationship between social comparison and psychological maladjustment. Notably, in the case of anxiety, the direct effect of the desire for fame was not significant, indicating that social comparison, moderated by self-discrepancy, fully mediated this relationship. In the context of the increasing phenomenon of the desire for fame in early adulthood, this study examines the effects of the desire for fame on psychological maladjustment and advances understanding of its mechanisms. The fact that social comparison-induced psychological maladjustment is amplified by the level of self-discrepancy suggests that emotional experiences may vary depending on an individual's psychological context in relation to f the desire for fame. It also identifies an intervention focus that can more effectively assist clients in the process of the desire for fame in the field of mental health counseling.

*Keywords: Desire for fame, social comparison, self-discrepancy, depression, anxiety.*

# A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PUBLIC PERSPECTIVES
# ON AUTISM FROM 2015 TO 2023

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**Abstract**

In 2015, Mitchell and Locke developed a survey assessing knowledge of autism sources, causes, diagnosis age, treatments, testing, and diagnostic symptoms. Utilizing Amazon's MTURK platform, they gathered responses from Americans and Canadians (N = 823) and found adequate autism knowledge. Blancher and Yetman (2023) administered Mitchell and Locke's original survey to a separate sample of Americans and Canadians (N = 858) to compare knowledge between the general population and medical students. The present study used data from these two published studies to conduct a comparative analysis using z-tests of two independent proportions. We analyzed survey response percentages from 2015 (Group 1) and 2023 (Group 2) samples to examine changes in autism knowledge within the general population over time. Regarding sources of information, media remained the top source of information about autism in both samples, but knowledge from doctors, clinics, schools, and personal experiences (8% to almost 32%) significantly increased in Group 2. Genetic and neurological causes continued to be the most commonly reported etiology of autism, while belief in vaccines as a cause declined significantly in Group 2 (4%). In regard to age of onset, participants in both groups accurately identified the age of onset for autism as 18-24 months, with no significant changes between the two samples. Doctors remained the top-rated resource for help in both years, and reliance on the internet and parent organizations decreased in favor of health departments and early interventionists. Regarding diagnostic testing, psychological, educational, and developmental assessments were consistently viewed as the most appropriate methods for evaluating autism, while ratings for speech and language evaluations and blood work declined. Good symptom knowledge was noted in both groups; however, there was a slight decrease in correctly identifying non-diagnostic traits such as illogical thinking and violent behavior. Concerning intervention, behavioral therapies and parent training were rated as the most effective treatment options in both years, with a significant increase in the endorsement of play therapy in Group 2. Perceptions of drugs as an appropriate treatment option decreased notably (19.8% to 11.0%), while physical exercise gained greater support in the 2023 sample. The comparison of Group 1 and Group 2 survey data highlights positive shifts in public understanding of autism; however, errors and misperception persist. These findings support the importance of ongoing public education efforts and leveraging platforms like social media to enhance awareness and support for autistic individuals.

*Keywords: Autism, community education, lay beliefs, autism awareness, MTURK.*

# EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

## SOCIAL STEREOTYPES IN ARMENIAN SCHOOLS IN LEBANON

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**Abstract**
The article analyzes and reveals the difficulties caused by social stereotypes encountered in Armenian schools in Lebanon. The problem of social stereotypes in the educational process has been and remains the focus of attention of pedagogues and psychologists. After all, the level of their educational process also depends on the level of awareness of social stereotypes. The effectiveness of awareness about social stereotypes in the educational process depends not only on the correct selection, development and application of educational programs, methods, means, forms, but also on the implementation of the whole systematic educational process, the pedagogues. The current research investigated the social stereotypes through 134 teachers from different regions, subject areas and teaching experiences. The google form used shed light on teacher awareness of these stereotypes and the types of social stereotypes that exists in these schools. The research offers recommendations and perspectives for universities and schools that aim to combat inequality and stereotypes in communities by equipping educators with knowledge about social stereotypes and new teaching strategies.

*Keywords: Social stereotypes, social skills, equality, inequality, educational psychology.*

## THE ROLE OF SCHOOL COUNSELOR IN THE ADMISSION OF STUDENTS EVACUATED FROM THEIR HOMES DUE TO WAR

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**Abstract**
The study deals with the school counsellor's role in accepting students evacuated from their homes following the 7/10 War in Israel. The purpose of the study was to examine the difficulties and challenges in the process of accepting evacuee students while focusing on the role of the school counsellor. As part of the research, semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten school counsellors from different schools involved in the student admission process. The research findings point to the following main themes: (a) difficulties of the evacuated students (sub-themes: emotional difficulties, social difficulties); (b) challenges for the school receiving the evacuees (sub-themes: building a personalized curriculum, creating a stable social environment, dealing with a lack of resources, supporting parents, creating a routine); (c) the role of the school counsellor in the process of accepting evacuees (sub-themes: systemic vision, building resilience, supporting students and teachers, making the educational system more flexible); (e) conclusions following the process of accepting students evacuated following the 7/10 War (sub-themes: early planning and cooperation with the authorities, introductory meetings with the evacuee families and adjusting programs for the students, creating a supportive social environment, maintaining a consistent and stable relationship, ensuring social integration and building a community). The study indicates that the inclusion process required unique adjustments for schools in order to deal with complex emotional and social difficulties. The study emphasizes the importance of the school counsellors' role and their contribution to creating a supportive and inclusive environment for the evacuated students. The research conclusions suggest that a flexible and adapted approach to the student's unique needs is required while cooperating with the educational staff and parents in order to ensure the successful absorption and full integration of the students into the educational system.

*Keywords: School counselling, time of crises, war, qualitative research.*

# A SCOPING REVIEW APPROACH TO GENERATION Z'S LEARNING STYLE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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**Abstract**
Increasingly, students in institutions of higher education are from Generation Z rather than the Millennial generation. This young generation represents individuals born between 1995-1997 and 2010-2012. Like each predecessor generation—Silent, Baby Boomer, Generation X, and Millennials in order from old to new—Generation Z also has unique characteristics. The literature has started to clarify the unique characteristics of this generation. Yet, empirical research on the learning style of Generation Z recently began in the context of higher education; thus, it remains unclear what learning style Generation Z students have as a whole. Accordingly, the aim of this study was to understand characteristics of Generation Z's learning styles by mapping emerging empirical results of learning styles for Generation Z. This study was a systematic scoping review applying the PRISMA flowchart. Following the identification of 945 potential studies, we identified 21 empirical studies of Generation Z in relation to the four groups of existing learning style theories with scales. We found that a single dominant learning style of Generation Z students could not be specified because each empirical study reported a particular learning style according to the learning style theory applied. Thus, the predominant learning styles of Generation Z depended on the learning theory and scales: that is, Concrete Sequential learning style of the Gregorc theory as a unimodal type; a Diverging learning style of the Kolb's model; an Active, Sensing, Visual, and Sequential learning style as dominant of the Felder-Silverman's/Felder-Soloman's paradigm; and a Visual style of the VAK and a Kinesthetic one of the VARK.

*Keywords: Learning style, Generation Z, scoping review, higher education.*

# VALIDATION OF THE GEORGIAN ADAPTIVE BEHAVIOR SCREENING INSTRUMENT

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**Abstract**
No reliable and valid measure of adaptive behavior is available in the Republic of Georgia. Thus, the Georgian Adaptive Behavior Screening Instrument-Research Version (GABSI-RV) was designed to provide data from which individual educational plans can be designed and monitored. This study's aim was to determine the psychometric features of the GABSI-RV with emphasis on evaluating the discriminatory capacity of the GABSI-RV using clinical (intellectual disability) and non-clinical groups of different ages. Participants were children and adolescents ages 4-18 divided into clinical (N=315); intellectual disability) and non-clinical comparison (N=296) groups. Results showed strong test-retest and inter-rater reliability. Analyses showed high internal consistency and that the measure discriminated across age groups. This measure has strong potential to fill and important gap in Georgia's education and mental health service delivery systems. The strategies deployed in this study have broad applicability for similar efforts in developing countries.

*Keywords: Adaptive behavior, assessment, levels of the independence, screening instrument.*

# WHEN BEING AT UNIVERSITY (ALSO) MEANS LEAVING HOME: CAN FAMILY SUPPORT MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO DROPOUT INTENTIONS?

**Teresa Mendes[1], Bárbara Gonzalez[1,2], Sara Albuquerque[1,3], Sónia Correia[4], & Paula Paulino[1,2]**
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## Abstract

Dropout is a major concern in higher education (HE) across countries, with long-lasting consequences. Previous research has shown that undergraduate students living away from home may be at higher risk of dropping out of HE, comparatively to those that keep living with their families, but results have been inconsistent. Moving away from home, living and studying independently are major steps for young people. While studying outside family homes may give HE students greater opportunities to exercise autonomy, it also brings added challenges that may interfere with students' academic adaptation, and lead to dropout. One factor for optimum academic integration may be the support students receive from their families. This study aimed to: (1) compare students away from home with students living with their families in their levels of dropout intentions (DOI), and in a set variables potentially related to dropout; (2) identify predictors of DOI and (3) examine the moderating role of perceived family support on the links between specific predictors and DOI. A stratified sample of 584 Portuguese undergraduate students aged <23 years (mean age = 20.18, $SD$ = 1.3), selected through a convenience quota method, was assessed for psychological, academic and economic variables through self-report instruments. Descriptive, (M)ANOVA, regression and moderation analyses were conducted. The findings showed that students away from home (n = 300; 51.4%) presented higher levels of dropout intentions, academic exhaustion, vocational, and economic difficulties, and lower levels of academic self-efficacy, well-being, perception of course value, and satisfaction with education. Students away from home also perceived higher levels of social support, namely family support. No differences were found in the levels of social connectedness to campus or autonomy difficulties between the two groups. Academic exhaustion, vocational, autonomy difficulties, perception of course value and social connectedness to the campus were significant predictors of DOI, explaining 43% of the variance. Moderation analyses showed that the effects of academic exhaustion, autonomy difficulties and vocational difficulties (the three strongest predictors of DOI) were weakened when students perceived moderate levels of family support (but not for higher levels). Overall, students away from home are at greater risk of emotional, academic and economic difficulties, and should receive differentiated attention from HE institutions. Despite being at distance, families play a protective role in preventing student dropout. Families may need help in providing support that enables their young adult students to thrive on their academic path, while fostering autonomy and competence.

*Keywords: Dropout intentions, higher education, emergent adulthood, students living away from home, family support.*

# EXPLORING COOPERATIVE LEARNING: A COMPARISON OF SCENE IMAGINATION AND VIRTUAL REALITY

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## Abstract

This study developed virtual reality cooperative learning material titled "ayalab Save ayami!" in which participants navigated a Western-style floating house in nocturnal darkness to rescue the main character. The study involved 30 female university students who participated in pairs, with each pair assigned either a "university student" or "detective" avatar. Within each pair, one participant was designated as the leader and the other as the non-leader. In the scene imagination experiment, participants viewed a Western-style house displayed on a tablet and engaged in cooperative learning, by deciphering codes associated with the seven treasures needed to save the main character and identifying the locations of each of the seven treasures hidden in the house (time limit: 10 minutes). In the virtual space experiment, participants used a 9th-generation iPad to enter the virtual environment, wore designated avatars, and searched for the seven

treasures in the virtual space (time limit: 10 minutes). The leader was tasked with taking pictures of the pair and each treasure and identifying each of the seven treasures, which were combined with cipher numbers. Questionnaires measuring group cohesion, critical thinking attitude (CTAS), the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI), and the short version of the Sense of Direction Questionnaire (SDQ-S) were administered before and after cooperative learning in both conditions. In the scene imagination condition, inquisitiveness regarding CTAS increased among non-leaders using the university student avatar. Regarding the IRI, the perspective-taking score increased for participants using the university student avatar, suggesting that these avatars may provide learning effects similar to those of real-life experiences. In the virtual space condition, the inquisitiveness of CTAS also increased for university students. Additionally, IRI scores for perspective-taking and fantasy scores increased for the university student leaders and detective non-leaders but decreased for university student non-leaders, detective leaders, and detective non-leaders. Group cohesion and SDQ-S scores remained unchanged. These findings suggest that there are differences in cooperative learning outcomes between scene imagination and virtual space conditions.

*Keywords: Cooperative learning, scene imagination, critical thinking attitude, sense of direction, avatar.*

# EKSIS: A WEBSITE-BASED FOR MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION PLATFORM TO ENHANCE ADOLESCENTS' RESILIENCE

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**Abstract**

Adolescent mental health poses a significant challenge worldwide. According to WHO data from 2019, the global prevalence of mental health conditions before the pandemic was 13%, or approximately 970 million people living with mental health issues, with 52.4% being female and 47.6% male. According to the Indonesia-National Mental Health Survey (I-NAMHS) in 2022, the prevalence of mental health problems among adolescents aged 10-17 years in 34 provinces in Indonesia was 34.9%. Approximately 11 million adolescents in Indonesia experience mental disorders, placing the country in the category of a mental health emergency for adolescents. This alarming prevalence places Indonesia in a mental health emergency for its youth. Among these adolescents, 52.58% are aged 10–13 years, and 47.42% are aged 14–17 years, with no significant gender differences in risk levels. Resilience is a part of mental health that refers to successful adaptation to stress. Adolescents with high resilience tend to have lower risk of having mental health problems. This study aims to develop the EKSIS Program, a community-based health promotion initiative designed to enhance adolescent resilience in stress management through a website-based platform. The program enables adolescents to access mental health resources, receive psychological support, and engage in tailored activities to build resilience. Grounded in the theory of internal self-resiliency, the study adopts a participatory action research design with a multi-method sequential exploratory approach, comprising three cycles. Cycle 1 involves investigating mental health problems in youth using intervention mapping and phenomenological methods with 18 informants. Cycle 2 focuses on developing instruments, content modules, the EKSIS Program, and digital media using intervention mapping and design thinking approaches. Cycle 3 evaluates website usability acceptance in adolescents. The study involved 60 adolescents aged 15–18 years from SMA Sooko Mojokerto, East Java, Indonesia. This research provides a foundation for developing adolescent mental health programs tailored to their specific needs. The proposed program aims to effectively and sustainably enhance resilience and stress management among adolescents in Mojokerto. This article focuses on the development of the EKSIS website which is used in the program.

*Keywords: Mental health, adolescents, resilience, health promotion, website-based media.*

# EFFECTS OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TOOLS ON CLASSROOM LEARNING OUTCOMES AND AI'S IMPACT ON THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION

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**Abstract**
Artificial Intelligence (AI) applications in education are predicted to increase internationally at a rate of 45% annually, reaching a value of $5.80 billion by 2025. This paper explores the intellectual and political impacts of integrating AI in classroom learning. It analyzes and discusses past classroom learning outcomes when integrated with AI technologies, as well as how classroom learning has evolved and will continue to evolve. To predict and adapt to the future of technology in education, where AI is deeply embedded into the fabric of our educational institutions, we must study its implications from various perspectives, from the classroom to broader society. This literature review aims to dissect the benefits and past results of AI integration, while also examining its controversies and barriers in wider contexts.

*Keywords: Artificial intelligence, classroom learning, educational technology.*

# GENDER DISPARITIES IN ICT: EXPLORING SELF-EFFICACY AND MOTIVATION TO STUDY ICT AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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**Abstract**
In an increasingly digitized world, ICT self-efficacy plays a critical role in shaping individuals' engagement with technology. This study explores the gender gap in ICT-related fields, examining factors such as academic performance, motivation, and technology self-efficacy among high school students. The research, based on a sample of 993 participants (68.2% female, 31.8% male), highlights significant gender differences. To measure key constructs, the study utilized the Brief Inventory of Technology Self-Efficacy (BITS) (Weigold & Weigold, 2021; Weingold, 2023) to assess ICT self-efficacy at novice, advanced, and expert levels. General self-efficacy was evaluated using the New General Self-Efficacy Scale (NGSE) (Chen & Eden, 2001). Motivation to study ICT was assessed through a five-item scale inspired by Mladenović et al. (2015) and Jenkins (2001), distinguishing between intrinsic, extrinsic, and achievement motivation. Gender-related stereotypes and discrimination were measured using the Stereotypes of Computer Science (CS) scale (Beyer et al., 2003). Statistical analyses included Welch's t-tests to examine gender differences across these measures. Despite female students outperforming males in mathematics and informatics, they demonstrate a lower intention to pursue ICT studies. Male students report higher intrinsic motivation and ICT self-efficacy at advanced and expert levels, while female students perceive greater formal discrimination in the field. The findings suggest that academic performance alone is insufficient to encourage female participation in ICT. Instead, interventions addressing intrinsic motivation, stereotypes, and skill development are crucial to fostering gender inclusivity in ICT careers.

*Keywords: ICT self-efficacy, gender differences, motivation, stereotypes, technology skills.*

# PUBLIC AND PRIVATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC, ACADEMIC, ECONOMIC AND PSYCHOLOGICAL VARIABLES

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**Abstract**
The Covid-19 pandemic has had a vast impact on society, particularly in the higher education (HE) context, with online classes and social isolation recommendations. While much of the post-pandemic research on this topic does not distinguish between public and private institutions or focuses mainly on public institutions, exploring students' realities (similarities and differences) in public and private universities deserves special consideration. Along with other aspects, considering the pandemic's economic challenges and discrepancies in tuition fees between institutions, such a topic might be of particular interest. Financial distress may encourage students to seek employment alongside their studies, which may lead to additional difficulties or potentially negative outcomes. This cross-sectional study aimed to: (1) compare students enrolled in public and private universities in a set of relevant variables, including dropout intentions; (2) assess if there are interaction effects between type of institution (public vs. private) and work status (being or not a working student). A stratified sample of 1070 Portuguese university students aged between 19 and 45 years (M = 22.87 ; SD = 3.64), selected through a convenience quota method, was assessed for sociodemographic, academic, economic, and psychological variables using self-report instruments. The data were collected between November 2022 and February 2023. Descriptive, two-factor ANCOVAs, and MANCOVAs, controlling for the study cycle (bachelor, master), were conducted. Regarding the type of institution, the findings showed that there were more displaced students in public universities, while private universities had more working students. Students from public universities showed greater adaptation difficulties in several domains. Although students from private institutions reported higher monthly expenses, no differences were found regarding economic difficulties or in the perception of income decrease in the last two years. No differences were found in the levels of academic self-efficacy, academic exhaustion, social connectedness to the campus, or dropout intentions between students from public and private universities. Working students showed higher economic difficulties than non-working students. No interaction effects were found between type of institution and work status. These findings provide valuable insights into the profiles of university students in both public and private institutions in a post-pandemic context. Many students in both public and private institutions work part-time or full-time to afford their education because of the rising cost of living. However, being a working student does not seem to imply greater academic exhaustion or association with dropout intentions, which may suggest a positive impact of this condition on academic performance and students' well-being. Further contributions to research and higher education stakeholders are discussed.

*Keywords*: *Higher education, public and private institutions, students' work status, academic adaptation difficulties, dropout intentions.*

# SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

## DEFINING HUMAN INTELLIGENCE TO CONTROL THE CURRENT DISSONANCE BETWEEN NEURODIVERGENT AND NEUROTYPICAL PEOPLE AMONGST YOUNGER YOUTH

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**Abstract**
The ongoing dissonance between young neurodivergent individuals who are diagnosed with any spectrum of Autism, Speech Delay, Dyslexia, OCD, etc. and neurotypical people has been pushed aside as a complex scenario for a long time due to the nature of difficulty and our lack of understanding of individual minds. Research shows that there are many factors e.g., increased awareness and societal shifts, contributing to the rising trend of neurodivergent children who need to be properly accommodated in modern social and educational settings. As a result of earlier negligence, studies predict that younger generations e.g., Gen Alpha and Gen Beta will encounter drastically worse effects of this disconnect with their neurotypical counterparts. My hypothesis is that current society tries to define human intelligence using either a standard intelligence quotient (IQ) or an emotional intelligence quotient (EQ) test to quantify specific analytical or mental abilities as well as empathy, motivation and social abilities. However, these techniques do not apply to all mental makeup equally and neurodivergent minds suffer from poor evaluation from these existing techniques. This fosters an inferiority complex amongst many neurodivergent young adults, showing a trend of lack of confidence and often depression. Many children who are tested as neurodivergent fall on the borderline and are often left in the wrong group of neurotypical children or clubbed with far extreme cases of neurodivergence which require medical therapy. These individuals are neglected today for whom a model is required to be built by integrating behavioral traits, learning abilities, and unique strengths and talents of these individuals alongside with their neurodivergence measure. Therefore, a tool that can assess neurodivergent minds e.g., developing neurodivergence quotient (NQ) is required to categorize their strength and make them feel wanted and useful for their contributions in society. This paper intends to establish the need of the model and initiate the formation of a methodology with a pilot study containing 70 survey respondents showing inherent natural inclinations for certain neurodivergent conditions, e.g., Autism, Asperger's, and ADHD.

*Keywords: Neurodivergent, neurotypical, human intelligence, youth, education.*

## CRITICAL THINKING AND SOCIAL NORMS AS BUFFERS AGAINST HATE SPEECH ACCEPTANCE

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**Abstract**
This study investigates the relationship between attitudes toward hate language and demographic, cognitive, and social factors among 250 individuals from Tbilisi, Georgia, and its regions. Using a face-to-face survey methodology, participants completed three measures: The Comprehensive Thinking Style Questionnaire (CTSQ), Iowa-Netherlands Comparison Orientation Measure (INCOM), and a Hate Language Scale. The results indicated significant gender differences, with women showing stronger disagreement with hate language. Education level was inversely correlated with tolerance for ageism, while thinking styles revealed that closed-mindedness positively correlated with acceptance of hate language, whereas open-minded and effortful thinking negatively correlated. Social comparison of opinions was associated with lower tolerance for direct hate language, reflecting the influence of societal norms. These findings highlight the protective role of education, cognitive openness, and social comparison in reducing prejudice and have practical implications for designing interventions aimed at mitigating hate language.

*Keywords: Hate language, comprehensive thinking style, social comparison.*

# BALANCING WORK-LIFE TIME:
## A NEW MEASUREMENT OF CORPORATE WELFARE

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**Abstract**
In recent decades, corporate welfare has become a central focus in modern organizations. It refers to goods, services, and actions designed to foster individuals' well-being, work, and quality of life. Current socio-cultural shifts lead people, particularly younger individuals and parents, to prioritize work-life balance (i.e., a broad set of policies implemented to enable people to better balance personal and professional time). These policies could support women's participation in the labor market and foster gender equality. Consequently, companies must adapt to attract and retain employees also through welfare policies. It is, therefore, essential to monitor and assess the usage of welfare measures provided by the organization. In this context, the present study aims to offer an initial contribution to evaluating the factorial structure and reliability of a new measurement scale designed to capture perceptions of corporate welfare measures. This scale is agile and capable of assessing how the welfare offerings are perceived in terms of personalization, communication, effective monitoring, and sustainability. Based on a literature review and consultation with a group of experts, nine items were developed to be evaluated using a 5-point Likert scale. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to assess the factorial structure, employing principal axis factoring as the extraction method. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test and Bartlett's test of sphericity were applied to verify the suitability of the scale for EFA. Eigenvalues greater than 1 and the scree plot were examined to determine the number of factors, with factor loadings exceeding |.40| selected. The KMO and Bartlett's results indicated an adequate sample size. Only one eigenvalue was above 1 (5.69), explaining 63.13% of the total variance, and the scree plot confirmed the selection of a single factor. All factor loadings for the nine items exceeded |.40|. Additionally, the scale demonstrated excellent reliability, achieving a Cronbach's alpha of .92. This tool can be valuable for organizations by accurately measuring employees' perceptions of implemented welfare practices. The results are promising, and future research could confirm the factor structure, also considering the construct and criterion validity. Moreover, corporate welfare could be considered an important organizational resource that, according to the Job-Demands Resources theory, could prevent organizational distress and counterproductive work behaviors (e.g., burnout, exit and neglect behavior) and improve workers' well-being (e.g., work engagement) and performance.

*Keywords: Corporate welfare, welfare measurement, work-life balance, organizational well-being, Job-Demands Resources theory.*

# ETHNOPSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES OF RETRAUMATIZATION

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**Abstract**
The study of the psychological states that develop from chronic psychological–traumatic situations around the world is one of the main challenges in psychological science. In light of the Nagorno-Karabakh wars, the forced displacement of ethnic Armenians, and severe, recurring traumatic events, we view re-traumatization among ethnic populations to be a highly important subject of study. The focus of this study is individual re-traumatization. The aim is to examine the ethnopsychological characteristics of the relationship between PTSD—which develops as a result of re-traumatization—and coping strategies. To achieve this aim, we used observation and clinical interview methods, along with the Mississippi Scale for Combat-Related PTSD (M-PTSD) and the Ways of Coping Questionnaire (WCQ) by Folkman and Lazarus (1988). The study involved 30 Armenian combatants aged between 55 and 75 (n = 30), who participated in the Nagorno-Karabakh wars (1991–1994, 2016, 2020). This group includes individuals who experienced an earthquake, underwent forced displacement, and are generations of those affected by genocide; they continue to serve in combat duty under conditions of ongoing re-traumatization. The study revealed relationships among the factors obtained from the methodologies.

According to the analysis of the M-PTSD data, among the participants (n = 30), 13 are well-adjusted (n = 13, Max = 86, Min = 65), approximately 15 have adaptation disturbances (PSYCH) (n = 15, Max = 108, Min = 91), and 2 of the combatants have PTSD (n = 2, Max = 134, Min = 133). According to the data obtained from the WCQ methodology, the following average scores were observed: Confrontive coping (avg = 10.7), Distancing (avg = 11.3), Self-controlling (avg = 13), Seeking social support (avg = 11.6), Accepting responsibility (avg = 7.03), Escape-Avoidance (avg = 10.7), Planful problem-solving (avg = 12.2), Positive reappraisal (avg = 13.06). There are positive and significant correlations between PTSD and Confrontive coping (r = 0.38, p < 0.01), PTSD and Distancing (r = 0.37, p < 0.01), PTSD and Self-controlling (r = 0.6, p > 0.001), PTSD and Accepting responsibility (r = 0.33, p < 0.05), PTSD and Escape-Avoidance (r = 0.31, p < 0.05), PTSD and Planful problem-solving (r = 0.45, p < 0.01), as well as PTSD and Positive reappraisal (r = 0.41, p < 0.01). Negative correlational relationships were found between being well-adjusted and Self-controlling (r = –0.32, p < 0.05), well-adjusted and Planful problem-solving (r = –0.39, p < 0.01), and well-adjusted and Positive reappraisal (r = –0.405, p < 0.01). During clinical interviews, it became clear that many participants had frequently experienced anxiety about the recurrence of traumatic events such as war, deportation, genocide, and earthquakes. They also reported sleep disorder, flashbacks, grief over the loss of comrades and family, feelings of guilt, and difficulties with attention, memory, and eating. In addition, many participants experienced physical symptoms such as asthma, allergies, heart arrhythmias, skin issues, gastrointestinal and reproductive problems, cardiovascular weakness, nervous system issues, and severe headaches. Traumatization is based on ethno-cultural and national socio-psychological factors, while re-traumatization has its roots in transgenerational and collective unconscious influences. As a result of re-traumatization, only a few individuals develop PTSD; instead, most people use coping strategies and generally adapt well despite repeated traumas.

*Keywords: War, forced displacement, PTSD, ethnos, trauma.*

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# THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL NETWORK CONTENT ON AUTO-AGGRESSION AND SELF-HARMING BEHAVIOUR IN ADOLESCENTS

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**Abstract**
Numerous research have shown the rate of non-suicidal self-harm among young people ranges from 14% to 21%. Those who self-harm have a risk of suicide that is thirty times higher than the general population. Teens who self-harm and have suicidal tendencies look to social media for support, escape, or even inspiration. However, social media is full of disruptive content and risks of dangerous interactions. The objective of the research was to identify the prevalence and accessibility of destructive content on different social media platforms for adolescents, and how this content can lead to auto-aggression and self-harming behaviour. We first reviewed 25 studies on the impact of destructive content on social media on the escalation of self-harming and suicidal behaviour in adolescents. We then conducted a content analysis of various social media for self-destructive content. In addition, we surveyed 236 adolescents between the ages of 12 and 19 to find out how often they encounter such content and how it affects them. According to a review of research and content analyses, there is a wide use of different ways of showing self-harm on social media - a combination of self-harm photos, videos, text images, etc. Moreover, images of more serious self-harm attracted more attention and comments. Viewing self-harm-related images online may increase the risk of self-harm. Social networks do host harmful content: up to 71.2% of survey participants said they had encountered such content without being specifically asked to do so. It is alarming that 22% of the teenagers surveyed thought about doing something risky, hurting themselves, hurting someone, or even committing suicide. From the results of previous and current studies, it is more than obvious that the destructive content of social networking sites affects the behaviour of adolescents, namely provoking auto-aggression and self-harm, normalises and popularises such behaviour. The results of the questionnaire survey and analysis of the content of social networking sites indicate the need to strengthen content censorship and tighten age restrictions. Of course, we need to hold classes and training on media education for children, parents and teachers to help form the right attitude to destructive content among teenagers.

*Keywords: Self-harming, auto-aggression, suicidal behaviour, destructive content, social media.*

# AUTONOMY SUPPORT AND ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION AMONG YOUNG ADOLESCENTS: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF SELF-ESTEEM

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**Abstract**

*Introduction*: Research has shown that parenting styles that support autonomy are linked to numerous positive developmental outcomes, including higher self-esteem and fewer health-risk behaviors. Autonomy support from both mothers and fathers plays a critical role in their children's development; however, previous findings on this subject, irrespective of parent-child gender dyads, have been inconsistent. *Aim*: This study aims to explore the association between autonomy support from fathers and mothers, as perceived by young adolescents, self-esteem, and lifetime alcohol consumption among boys and girls. *Methods*: The research sample consisted of 1,125 young adolescents (mean age = 12.99 years, SD = 0.77), with 50.1% being girls. Mediation analysis was conducted separately for boys and girls using PROCESS (Model 4) in SPSS version 25.0. The independent variables were autonomy support from mothers and fathers, the dependent variable was lifetime alcohol consumption, and the mediator was self-esteem. Alcohol availability and descriptive normative beliefs about alcohol consumption were included as covariates. *Results*: Boys reported significantly higher levels of self-esteem and lower levels of autonomy support from their fathers. Girls who reported no lifetime alcohol consumption demonstrated higher levels of self-esteem and received more autonomy support from both mothers and fathers. The mediation analysis revealed a significant indirect effect of autonomy support from mothers on reported alcohol consumption through self-esteem, but only among girls. Similarly, there was a significant indirect effect of autonomy support from fathers on reported alcohol consumption through self-esteem, but only among boys. This indicates that higher levels of maternal autonomy support, as perceived by girls, and higher levels of autonomy support from fathers, as perceived by boys, were each associated with an increase in self-esteem, which subsequently reduced the likelihood of reporting alcohol consumption—among girls in the first case, and among boys in the second. *Conclusion*: young adolescents' perceptions of autonomy support from both mothers and fathers were indirectly associated with alcohol consumption through self-esteem, with this effect varying by gender. These findings emphasize the importance of family-based programs that address young adolescent alcohol use, considering both the parent's and the child's gender.

*Keywords: Autonomy support, self-esteem, alcohol consumption, adolescents.*

# EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEER RELATIONSHIPS, FAMILY UNPREDICTABILITY AND SOCIAL APPEARANCE ANXIETY AND EMOTIONAL AUTONOMY IN ADOLESCENTS

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**Abstract**

The aim of this study is to examine the relationships between peer relationships, family unpredictability and social appearance anxiety and the emotional autonomy levels of individuals in adolescence. The sample of the study consists of a total of 442 high school students, 278 girls and 164 boys, studying in science high schools, Anatolian high schools and vocational high schools in Istanbul in the 2023-2024 academic year. The age range of the adolescents included in the study is between 13 and 18 years old. The study was conducted on a voluntary basis while collecting data. The data of the study were collected through the Emotional Autonomy Scale (EAS), Retrospective Family Unpredictability Scale (REAS), Social Appearance Anxiety Scale (SAAS), Peer Relationship Scale (PRA) and Demographic Information Forms. When the analyses were examined; it can be said that there is a statistically significant negative relationship between family unpredictability and emotional autonomy. Social appearance anxiety negatively correlates with emotional autonomy, while peer relationships show a positive correlation. Emotional autonomy levels vary by class level and high school type but not by gender. Additionally, social appearance anxiety, peer relationships, and family unpredictability predict adolescent autonomy. Findings were discussed alongside similar studies, with recommendations for practitioners and researchers.

*Keywords: Social appearance anxiety, family unpredictability, peer relationships.*

# CAREGIVER ROLE AND LIFE PROJECT OF SIBLINGS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

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**Abstract**
In Uruguay, the last decade has seen a deepening of care issues; this is reflected in public policies and in the academic interest in addressing, teaching and researching these topics. According to Uruguay's National Integrated Care System (SNIC), there are three populations requiring care: children, people dependent due to disability and/or old age. A fourth population becomes relevant: caregivers, both formal and informal. This project focuses on an intrafamily caregiving figure, the siblings of people with disabilities. Although there are studies at the international level, work with these figures has not been systematized or promoted at the local level. They have remained invisible, but they are the ones who assume care when parents are unable to do so. This study aims to characterize the profile of siblings in relation to the burden of care, as well as their perception of family health and social support. Results related to the intersection of these three dimensions are presented, as well as the presence of double burden of care and whether the participant lives with his/her sibling with a disability.

*Keywords: Siblings, disability, caregiving, family, social support.*

# LEGAL PSYCHOLOGY

## IMPLEMENTING TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICES TO ADDRESS VIOLENCE AND TRAUMA IN ADDICTION RECOVERY

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**Abstract**

Recovery from addiction often intersects with trauma or violence, which complicates sobriety. Addiction behaviors can be exacerbated by unresolved trauma, which increases the risk of relapse and prevents full recovery from addiction. This paper aims to explore how trauma-informed practices can be integrated into addiction recovery settings to ensure emotional and psychological wounds do not impede the recovery journey. The objective of this study was to assess the implementation and effectiveness of trauma-informed practices within a Therapeutic Recovery Community (TRC) involving 58 residents. Each participant dealt with the compounded effects of trauma and addiction. The study aimed to determine how trauma-sensitive interventions could alleviate emotional distress, reduce violence-related behaviors, and help residents process past trauma, ultimately supporting long-term recovery and emotional resilience. To address these issues, trauma-sensitive counseling, mindfulness exercises, and cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) were implemented, tailored to the individual needs of residents. These interventions were designed to improve emotional regulation, reduce impulsive behaviors, and promote healing. A safe and supportive community environment was also created to allow residents to openly address trauma's impact on their recovery. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, using quantitative tools such as the Trauma Symptom Inventory-2 (TSI-2) to measure trauma-related symptoms and the Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ) to assess impulsive, violence-related behaviors. Qualitative data were gathered through resident interviews and focus groups, examining emotional regulation, coping strategies, and residents' sense of safety. Results indicated that 75% of participants experienced significant improvements in trauma-related symptoms, including reduced anxiety and emotional dysregulation. Significant reductions were also observed in aggression and impulsive behaviors associated with violence. Qualitative feedback revealed that residents felt more in control of their emotions and better equipped to manage triggers related to past trauma, highlighting the importance of the safe and supportive environment. This study underscores the critical role trauma-informed practices play in addressing trauma and violence in addiction recovery. By fostering a supportive environment, these practices significantly reduce trauma-related symptoms and impulsive behaviors, while promoting emotional healing and sustained sobriety. This research advocates for broader use of trauma-sensitive interventions in addiction recovery programs to enhance emotional well-being and reduce the risk of relapse.

*Keywords: Trauma, violence, addiction, trauma-informed care.*

# A SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE ON TRAIT ANGER AND ANGER EXPRESSION IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

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**Abstract**

Intimate partner violence constitutes a significant socioeconomic and public health issue. Consequently, recognizing variables that may elevate the vulnerability to physical attack is crucial for both prevention and intervention. Extensive research indicates that anger is a significant risk factor for interpersonal violence. The aim of this study is to examine trait anger and anger expression styles in terms of demographic variables in individuals in romantic relationships, which present early examples of domestic violence dynamics. The sample of the study consisted of 262 participants between ages 18-56, of which 49.6% (130) were women and 50.4% (132) were men. Participation in the study was on a voluntary basis and consisted of people. Data collection instruments included a sociodemographic information form and the trait anger and anger expression scale. Data were collected online through Google form, and the analyses was conducted using SPSS 27.0. The study found that gender was not significantly associated with trait anger, but women scored higher on the Anger/In and Anger Control subscales. This suggests that women tend to direct their anger inward, while men tend to express their anger more. However, these tendencies may vary with individual and cultural differences. A meta-analysis of theses in Türkiye concluded that anger levels did not differ according to gender. Women are more successful in anger management, and their anger levels are found to be lower than men. The 18-25 age group scored higher on both Trait Anger and Anger/In and Anger/Out subscales, but no significant difference was found on the Anger Control scale. University graduates scored higher on Trait Anger and Anger/In subscales, but better results on the Anger Control scale. Low socioeconomic status increases stress and anger, resulting in higher levels of trait anger. The data are consistent with general trends in the literature, but some findings may be influenced by the cultural context. Social norms in Türkiye may contribute to women's introverted anger expressions and young individuals experiencing more anger.

*Keywords: Anger, anger expression, romantic relationships.*

# COGNITIVE AND EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

## THE COGNITIVE COMPLEXITY IN READING
## THE ARABIC SCRIPT OF MALAY

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**Abstract**
The Malay language is a synchronous digraphic language as it is written in both the Roman Script (or Latin Script, henceforth, Rumi) and the Arabic Script (henceforth, Jawi). Unfortunately, the majority of the Malay speakers are not Rumi-Jawi biscriptals; in fact, Jawi is marginalized despite being the other official script for the Malay language. Jawi has been described as cognitively more complex than Rumi due to the inconsistent cognitive mapping between the Jawi symbols and the sound each symbol is said to represent. There are 4 spelling patterns in the current Jawi spelling system and this further complicates the process of reading Jawi. However, more scientific evidence is needed to support this claim. Hence, this study was conducted to illustrate how complex the process of reading Jawi is. Three experiments were conducted using the E-Prime Software that is linked to the TOBII TX300 eye tracker. Experiment 1, Experiment 2, and Experiment 3 were conducted on 30 Jawi readers to investigate the complexity in reading all four spelling patterns. Experiment 1 measured participants' correct responses and their Reaction Times in choosing the correct spelling for the words that the participants heard whereas Experiment 2 and Experiment 3 measured the participants' correct responses, reaction times (Onset), and the reading duration when two-syllable Malay words written in current Jawi spelling system were presented to them. Results show that different spelling patterns result in different mean number of correct responses and in different mean reaction times (in Experiment 1, Experiment 2, and Experiment 3). This suggests that some spelling patterns in the current Jawi spelling system are easy whereas some are not. This study hence proposes that a more consistent spelling system should be introduced to Jawi so that the number of Rumi-Jawi biscriptals can increase in the future.

*Keywords: Arabic script, cognitive complexity, Malay, reading, spelling.*

## A TICKING 'TIME' BOMB: THE CHALLENGES AND COPING
## STRATEGIES OF EMPLOYED FEMALES' WELL-BEING

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**Abstract**
Financially empowered women contribute to their families and communities, promoting wider social benefits like education, improved health, and lower child mortality rates (HSRC, 2024). This highlights the critical social and economic benefits employed females (EF) provide. The number of EF has increased over the years due to the need for increased financial support in families. Although the female employment rate in South Africa (SA) is only 55,8% this is an increase from 38% in 1995 (StatsSA, 2024). Furthermore, more than 60% of women are the primary household purchasers, irrelevant of employment status (IQBusiness, 2020). Regardless of their relationship status, EF often have family responsibilities and are expected to balance dual roles concerning work, home, and other responsibilities, increasing stress and lowering levels of overall well-being (Commision of Gender Equality, 2024). This is driven by SA having more than 42% female-headed households (StatsSA, 2023). Healthy females are the foundation for healthy societies and constant high-stress levels are not sustainable. Balance of work and life poses challenges for EF and therefore, EF need coping strategies to support their overall well-being. Psychological well-being allows EF to increase happiness, focus, and effectively complete daily tasks. This study aims to reflect on the challenges and coping strategies of EF during purchasing decision tasks. *Methods*: The results presented were part of a larger research project, including similar independent qualitative and quantitative studies. An exploratory qualitative study entailed four EF focus groups that identified and described

challenges and coping strategies until data saturation. Furthermore, an exploratory quantitative study (N = 255) was conducted among EF using online questionnaires, providing descriptive and correlational data. *Results*: Both studies indicated that the predominant challenge facing all EF is the lack of time. Despite innovative coping strategies, including support, planning purchases and shopping online, unhealthy or unsustainable coping strategies were also identified, including paying higher prices for convenience, depending on fast food, and having a fight or flight response, which is not viable in the long term. *Conclusion*: Enhanced psychological well-being may help EF manage challenges. A balanced work-life environment and healthy coping strategies might improve their well-being, performance under stress, and self-efficacy, benefiting society.

*Keywords: Employed females, challenges, coping strategies, well-being, women.*

# PSYCHOLOGICAL LITERACY IN FUTURE TEACHERS: A STUDY AMONG SLOVAK UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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**Abstract**
Research on psychological literacy began in the early 1990s. It is defined as the ability to apply psychological principles to personal, social, and organizational issues in work, relationships, and the broader community. However, little attention has been given to psychological literacy components in teachers, and such measures have not been developed in Slovakia. This study focuses on components developed within pre-service teacher training programs to examine if their development is sufficient or if changes are needed to improve psychological preparation for teachers. Specifically, we focused on resilience, self-perception, self-control, and self-efficacy. The aim of this study was to explore whether there are differences in these variables based on the year of study (i.e., whether studying psychology-related courses improve psychological competencies). A total of 646 students – future teachers (68.4% women), aged 17 to 34 (Mage=20.89, SD=1.90), participated in the research. Of the participants, 54.6% were in their first bachelor's year, 14.7% were in their second, 3.6% in their third, and 27.1% in their first master's year. The sample was selected based on availability, with students approached directly during lectures. Data collection was anonymous and voluntary (extra points were awarded) and took place in four rounds, from February 2019 to January 2024, using a paper-based questionnaire. The questionnaire included sociodemographic data (age, gender, year of study), the Resilience Scale, the Self Perception Scale, the Self-Control Scale, and the General Self-Efficacy Scale. ANOVA for independent samples in SPSS 21.0 was used to analyze the differences. Results revealed significant differences based on the year of study in the following areas: a) resilience (social competence ($p<.001$), family cohesion ($p<.001$), social resources ($p<.001$)); b) self-perception (school competence ($p=.002$), close friendship ($p=.030$)); c) self-efficacy ($p=.015$). Post-hoc tests showed that differences predominantly manifest negatively: social competence, family cohesion, and social resources decrease in higher years. Results for school competence and close friendship were mixed, with occasional decreases and increases. The only variable showing improvement was self-efficacy, where students in higher years scored higher. These results highlight the need for improved psychological training in pre-service teacher education, with more psychology-related courses focused on enhancing key psychological competencies.

*Keywords: Psychological literacy, students, teachers.*

# PSYCHOLOGICAL PROTECTION NEURON NETWORK TO RESCUE DAMAGED BUILDINGS AND THE EXPERIENCED HORROR OF EARTHQUAKES

**Stanimir Karapetkov[1], Philip Philipoff[2], Emad Abdulahad[3], Kamen Ishtev[1], Diana Bankova[1], Plamen Manev[4], Elka Radeva[5], Venelin Kondov[6], Petia Minkova[7], Daniela Arnaudova[8], Simeon Panev[1], Ivan Demerdzhiev[9], Blagovest Panev[10], Ilian Dinev[11], Galina Maslarska[11], Mehmet Salih Bayraktutan[12], Venkatanathan Natarajan[13], Mario Muñoz Organero[14], & Dimo Dimov[15]**

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**Abstract**

A huge amount of the Earth's population lives in high-rise apartment buildings. According to Signal Processing theory (Poularikas, 2000); (Jivkov et al. 2013), (Венелин Живков, Симеон Панев, Филип Филипов, (2023), [Through the bowels of mechanics), Mechanics of Mashines], (in Bulgarian)) three types of buildings are described here. Buildings up to 3 stories are high frequency and rigid. They are slightly affected by seismic signals, which are of low frequency than the 3 story buildings. In case of an earthquake, the evacuationfrom at the 3 story buildings takes seconds. Buildings between 3 and 16 floors are strongly affected by seismic signals, because in this frequency range they enter into resonance with the spectral characteristics of seismic signals. Buildings over 16 stories are low-frequency and hardlyresonate with seismic signals. These buildings are strongly affected by hurricane winds, because these are the spectral characteristics of hurricanes. Another very important dynamic characteristic of dynamic inputs is the duration of signals. According to the mechanics of destruction, short-term dynamic signals of less than 10 seconds, for example, can hardly enter into resonance and lead to serious disturbances of massive buildings. Buildings between 3 and 16 floors are considered seismically vulnerable. Evacuation from a vulnerable collapsing building is extremely dangerous and impossible!!! Those trying to save themselves by evacuating from a collapsing vulnerable building go into shock. Those trying to save themselves by evacuating from a collapsing building go into shock!!!!! Fortunately, almost all such buildings are equipped with elevators. This enables them to be combined into a neural network. Dynamic vulnerability type buildings are protected by neural network over the elevator renovation. Such a neural network guarantees full protection of people and animals in existing buildings with elevator devices during a hurricane wind or an earthquake of arbitrary magnitude, arbitrary duration and arbitrary spectral composition of seismic signals. In addition to saving the lives of people and animals, the neural network takes care of the experienced shock. Earthquake survivors in ruined buildings go into shock. This system provides psychological protection also from the shock after rescue from the destroyed neighboring buildings and the experienced horror of the earthquakes.

*Keywords: Psychological protection neural network, elevator devices upgrade, signal processing, cognitive and experimental psychological neural networks.*

# AN ECOLOGICAL APPROACH TO THEORY-OF-MIND MEASUREMENT: CREATION OF THE EV-TOMI FROM OPEN-ENDED REPORTS

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**Abstract**

Theory-of-Mind (ToM), or mentalizing about what other people might be thinking about, is an important part of conscious experience that facilitates social cognition and navigation of our perceived worlds (e.g., predicting other people's thoughts and behaviours). In a 2023 study, our research group began exploring Theory-of-Mind in relation to inner speech, and we found that the selected ToM measures left something to be desired. For example, measures claiming to capture ToM had items that seemed to describe understanding of one's own time perception or one's own episodic memory rather than thinking about other people's mentalizations. Furthermore, existing ToM questionnaires are typically based on *a priori* notions of what researchers think ToM is, for example, as informed by literature reviews and judged by a panel of experts. To fill this gap, and in seeking ecological validity for ToM measurement, our team took an open-format approach to ask Canadian students, "if you are trying to infer what other people are thinking or experiencing, what comes into your mind?" We have used these responses to create the "Ecologically Valid Theory-of-Mind Inventory" (EV-ToMI). Here we present preliminary results of endorsement, reliability, and validity of this measure, and relationships with other self-processes.

*Keywords: Theory-of-Mind (ToM), inner speech, self-processes, self-awareness, measurement.*

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# MITIGATING THE COGNITIVE COMPLEXITY IN READING THE ARABIC SCRIPT OF MALAY VIA SPELLING REFORMATION

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**Abstract**
The Arabic Script of Malay (henceforth, Jawi) has been found to be cognitively complex, and this could be a reason why this script is marginalized by a majority of Malay speakers, despite Malay being a digraphic (or biscriptal) language. The preference of the Roman Script (or Latin Script, henceforth Rumi) over Jawi is unacceptable because Rumi is not meant to replace Jawi. In another study, three experiments using the E-Prime Software have shown that Jawi is complex due to the four spelling patterns in the current Jawi spelling system. This paper, hence, proposes a change in the current Jawi spelling system so as to mitigate its complexity. A new Jawi spelling system named EZ-Jawi was designed to achieve this aim. EZ-Jawi is less complex compared to the current Jawi spelling system as the former has a consistent mapping between the Jawi symbols and the Malay speech sound each symbol represents. Instead of using three letters to represent 6 vowel sounds (and the same 3 letters to represent consonant sounds, EZ-Jawi introduces the use of six diacritics to represent all six vowel sounds in Malay. Thirty participants participated in an intervention program in which the EZ-Jawi module was introduced. Following this, they participated in an experiment using the E-Prime Software that is linked to the TOBII TX300 eye tracker, which required them to read 30 Malay words in a) the current Jawi spelling system and b) EZ-Jawi. Results show that the mean number of correct responses in reading EZ-Jawi is significantly higher than the current Jawi spelling system and that the reaction time (onset) to reading is significantly faster in reading EZ-Jawi than the current Jawi spelling system. These findings support our suggestion that a reform in the current Jawi spelling system is necessary so that reading Jawi will no longer be a difficult task, and eventually, Jawi will no longer be marginalized by its speakers.

*Keywords: Arabic script, cognitive complexity, Malay, reading, spelling.*

# CLASSIFICATION OF VISUAL SCENES BY OVERALL COLORFULNESS

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**Abstract**

Classifying objects or events is vital for survival and daily life. Categorization learning varies in its structure, stimulus-response associations, and feedback methods. In typical experiments, observers classify objects and receive feedback after each response, gradually associating stimuli with correct responses through trial and error. Determining which features of objects are relevant for classification can be complex. Color is a common visual characteristic used in this process, though colors are spread among multiple objects in natural scenes. This study explored observers' ability to classify visual scenes based on color dominance when the number of objects varied. The stimuli included 21 red and yellow squares within a 10x10 cm black square, with proportions of red and yellow ranging from 6/15 to 15/6. A total of 16 different stimuli were generated based on these color ratios, whereas the groupings of squares varied from 2 to 18 clusters. The classification was based on the rule that stimuli with more red squares were one category, while those with more yellow squares constituted the other. Each stimulus was shown five times in random order, totaling 80 presentations. Thirty-five observers (23 females and 12 males) aged 20 to 69 (average age 45) participated, learning to classify the stimuli through trial and error with feedback provided via sound signals. All observers were unaware of the classification rule. The cumulative sum of responses was formed and normalized by the number of presentations to reflect the observers' alignment with the classification rule. A robust regression method and a generalized mixed model regression analyzed factors influencing response accuracy and time. Results indicated: an improvement in response accuracy and a reduction in response time among observers; accuracy plateauing at about 75% in the final experimental block; just over half of the observers recognized the classification rule at various times during the experiment, observers who did not identify the classification rule changed their strategies more frequently, the percentage of correct responses increased with the color ratio more for dispersed stimuli; response times decreased with distance from the decision boundary between categories. The challenges in quickly classifying stimuli based on color suggest that the spatial characteristics of the objects may be the dominant feature, and separating the scenes into objects may hinder the ability to perceive individual object colors and the image's overall colorfulness accurately.

*Keywords: Vision, category learning, color and spatial characteristics, colorfulness.*

# CAN COGNITIVE FUNCTIONS BE INFERRED FROM NEUROIMAGING DATA? A REVERSE INFERENCE META-ANALYSIS OF THEORY-OF-MIND TASKS

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**Abstract**

Cognitive neuroscience research using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) has predominantly focused on localizing patterns of neural activity associated with human cognitive functions. This approach, known as *forward inference*, has been pivotal in pinpointing brain areas engaged during specific cognitive tasks and testing hypotheses about brain-behavior relationships. In contrast, the use of reasoning from brain activation to cognitive functions, known as *reverse inference*, has been considered more informative because it allows researchers to interpret neural activity patterns to make inferences about the cognitive domain likely at play. Crucially, *reverse inference* considers how selectively the area is activated by the cognitive function under investigation, which is particularly important given the multifunctional nature of many cortical and subcortical areas. Nevertheless, the practical application of *reverse inference* in fMRI research remains methodologically challenging. Here, we performed a meta-analytic *reverse inference* analysis of brain activations related to Theory-of-Mind (ToM) tasks to evaluate whether this approach can effectively identify selective brain areas recruited for this critical human cognitive function. Leveraging data from the BrainMap database, we analyzed 223 published fMRI experiments involving ToM tasks (1069 healthy participants and 1526 activation foci) and compared these findings to fMRI data from other tasks stored in the BrainMap database (110 distinct cognitive tasks, 8154 published experiments, 127112

healthy participants, and 66649 activation foci). To achieve this, we applied Bayes fACtor mOdeliNg, a novel Bayesian-based, data-driven, hypothesis-free method that provides posterior probability distributions for the evidence of selectivity with respect to a given mental process. We found that several brain areas commonly recruited in ToM tasks (e.g., bilateral inferior frontal gyri, superior temporal cortices, and posterior cingulate cortex) show a low level of selectivity ($P < 50\%$), indicating their involvement across multiple cognitive domains. The results also revealed a small, organized set of highly selective areas ($P > 90\%$; e.g., bilateral superior frontal gyri, inferior temporal gyri, right precuneus, and anterior cingulate cortex) that map the cognitive function of ToM. These results provide a more refined and nuanced approach to understanding the neural basis of cognition, offering valuable insights for the development of formal cognitive ontologies and the refinement of brain-cognition models.

# RISK MANAGEMENT AT THE POLICE PRACTICE THROUGH NEURAL NETWORKS

**Stanimir Karapetkov[1], Philip Philipoff[2], Emad Abdulahad [3], Kamen Ishtev[4], Diana Bankova[5], Plamen Manev [6], Elka Radeva[7], Venelin Kondov [8], Petia Minkova [9], Daniela Arnaudova[10], Simeon Panev[11], Ivan Demerdzhiev[12], Blagovest Panev[13], Ilian Dinev[14], Galina Maslarska[15], Mehmet Salih Bayraktutan[16], Venkatanathan Natarajan[17], Mario Muñoz Organero[18], & Dimo Dimov[19]**

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**Abstract**
Three Psychological examples are described in this study. These examples are included in the area of the dualism - aggression / depression and are connected with deficit of special doctors: a psychiatrist and a psychologist communication in a real police practice. Unfortunately, everything in this report is authentic and based on real life events.

*Keywords: Dualism aggression – depression, signal processing in $L_2$, cognitive and experimental psychological neural networks.*

# ENVIRONMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

## GREEN ATTITUDE PROGRAMME AND ITS IMPACT ON YOUTHS' ATTITUDE ON GREEN ACTIVITIES AND APPRECIATION OF GREEN NATURE

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**Abstract**
One of the challenges faced by today's youth community is to ensure that the green nature heritage is preserved and sustained for the future generation. To create awareness among youths in preserving and nurturing green nature, a group of psychology students organised 'Green Attitude Programme'. It was based on the Green Attitude Module developed across the disciplines of social psychology, agronomy and entrepreneurship. The aim of the programme was to enhance the positive attitude in three aspects, namely, affective, cognitive, and psychomotor, of the participants on green activities and to assess the improvement of their green affinity in those aspects before and after they had completed the two-day Green Attitude Programme. The program had 15 participants, with an average age of 22.80 years (SD = 3.50). The study revealed significant positive improvements in participants' attitudes across three aspects related to green activities, as well as in their sense of connection to nature following the programme. The results give a glimpse of new idea that in enhancing green attitude effectively, there is a need to develop a multi-disciplinary green attitude programme. Although the Green Attitude Programme relied more on the Yale Model based on the social psychology approach, ideas from different disciplines, such as, agronomy and entrepreneurship can be suitably included. That inclusion can strengthen the quality and content of the Green Attitude Module in developing a positive attitude of the participants towards green activities and nature conservation. The effectiveness of the Green Attitude Module as a guide to run the Green Attitude Programme indicated that the module developed in this study can be used as one of the Green psychological interventions that can effectively change people to develop robust green attitude and better appreciation of nature.

*Keywords: Green attitude, affective, cognitive, psychomotor.*

# HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY

## INDIVIDUALS' INFANT VACCINATION DECISIONS: THE ASSOCIATION WITH OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE KNOWLEDGE

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**Abstract**
Despite the successful role of vaccination in health promotion, vaccine hesitancy remains a growing concern. Information technology and social media fuel vaccine hesitancy, spreading dis- and misinformation about vaccination, affecting caregivers' ability to make informed decisions on whether to vaccinate their infants. This South African study investigated the association of vaccination decisions with objective and subjective knowledge. Objective knowledge was measured using a standardised scale on general vaccine-related proven facts, while the 5-point Likert scale on subjective knowledge was developed from similar studies and vaccine-related literature. The online survey used convenience and purposive sampling (N = 415). Only 73.6% of respondents had made a positive decision to vaccinate their infants. Respondents scored under average (45.7%) on the objective knowledge test, while the mean score (3.61 ± 0.68) for subjective knowledge indicated a knowledge self-rating higher than other people. A positive vaccination decision correlated positively with objective knowledge and negatively with subjective knowledge. There was also a difference in subjective knowledge, with respondents with a negative decision rating their subjective knowledge higher than those with a positive decision. Our results indicate that objective knowledge about infant vaccinations remains low, although individuals perceive their knowledge to be more than others, suggesting that they are unaware of their knowledge limitations. Since both objective and subjective knowledge showed correlations with vaccination decisions, both these types of knowledge should be considered in the planning of health promotion attempts to improve vaccination uptake.

*Keywords:* Health promotion, objective knowledge, subjective knowledge, infant vaccinations, vaccination decisions.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL CORRELATES OF CANCER SURVIVAL

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**Abstract**
For studying the involvement of psychology in physical health it is necessary to define the psychological factors. The purpose of the study was to define psychological variables that support cancer survival. The theoretical approach was based on the cognitive orientation (CO) health model (Kreitler & Kreitler) The methodology of identifying the relevant psychological factors is based on interviewing pretest subjects according to systematic specific guidelines that enable defining themes summarized in the form of a questionnaire. The questionnaire of the CO of survival included statements referring to beliefs about oneself, norms, goals and general. The themes were identified in a separate preliminary study in which recurrence was retrospective. In the major study the CO questionnaire was administered to cancer patients with three different diagnoses (breast, melanoma, colorectal) in the first phase of their medical treatment and they were checked again after 5 years and then again after 12 years. The dependent variables were no recurrence or recurrnce (metastases, mortality). The correct identification of the no recurrence patients was by discriminant analysis significant for all groups and all patients after 5 years, and for breast cancer and all patients after 12 years.The results support the role of CO as the basis for identifying the relevant psychological correlates of survival in cancer.

*Keywords:* Cognitive orientation, survival, breast cancer, melanoma, colorectal cancer.

# PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV IN TREATMENT WITH LONG-ACTING ANTIRETROVIRAL THERAPY: WHICH PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS ARE ASSOCIATED?

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**Abstract**

Adherence to antiretroviral therapy (ART) is an important health behaviour linked to a reduced chance of drug resistance and lower viraemia in people living with HIV. Several psychosocial factors seem to be implicated both in adherence behaviour and consequently in the management of HIV disease. For example, psychological distress (anxiety and depression), personality traits, dysfunctional coping strategies seem to be related to both poor adherence behaviour and disease severity. Despite advances in the development of ART, several challenges are associated with current treatment involving daily, lifelong oral pills (i.e., stigma concerns, daily reminders of HIV status, medical problems). Long-acting injectable ART allows reduced dosing frequencies, minimising the impact of forgetfulness and high pill burden. Despite this, few studies have yet addressed the psychosocial aspects associated with this new regimen. Therefore, the aim of the present longitudinal study is to investigate the psychological aspects of people living with HIV (PLWH) making the transition from oral antiretroviral therapy to LA injection therapy. Specifically, the objectives are as follows: a) to carry out a baseline assessment of certain personality characteristics; b) to carry out a longitudinal assessment of medical-clinical and psychological variables; c) to investigate which socio-demographic, clinical and psychological factors are associated with a better quality of life (QoL) and lower levels of anxiety and depression. The study project is aimed at PLWH undergoing treatment at the HIV Infection Outpatient Clinic, Amedeo di Savoia Hospital, Turin, in Italy. The study was proposed to PLWH who had been identified by the infectious disease physician as eligible for LA therapy since the time of approval by the Hospital Ethics Committee (reference number 0030555). PLWH were asked to complete questionnaires via an online survey during the first administration of LA therapy (T0), during the fourth administration, 5 months later (T1), and during the seventh administration, 11 months later (T2). The data collected include socio-demographic information (e.g. gender, age, sexual orientation, marital status) and clinical information (e.g. date of diagnosis, course of infection, medical comorbidities). Finally, psychological variables (personality traits, alexithymia, social support, locus of control, stigma, quality of life, anxiety, and depression) will be assessed. Investigating which factors are associated with a better QoL is very important in order to structure tailored psychological interventions. Psychological interventions, if carried out in a timely manner, could reduce the risk of psychological distress in the long term, improving psychological adaptation to the disease and promoting ART adherence.

*Keywords: Long-acting antiretroviral therapy, HIV, quality of life, psychological distress, stigma.*

# SENSORY PROCESSING SENSITIVITY AND VIA CHARACTER STRENGTHS AMONG STUDENTS

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**Abstract**

Sensory processing sensitivity (SPS), a significant hereditary personality trait, plays a crucial role in how individuals perceive, process, and respond to stimuli. It is characterized by heightened sensitivity, deep cognitive engagement with sensory input, and a strong capacity for empathic responses. Individuals with high SPS, often referred to as highly sensitive persons (HSPs), are distinguished by their ability to detect subtle environmental changes and their predisposition toward reflective behaviors. While previous studies have emphasized the potential challenges faced by individuals with high SPS, there is a growing focus on understanding how these individuals can achieve greater well-being, given that they are more responsive and flexible to negative and positive environmental effects and can significantly benefit from psychological interventions. Apart from the complexity of sensory processing sensitivity, character strengths represent another psychological concept of interest. According to Peterson and Seligman (2004), these strengths are positive attributes that manifest in thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Recognition and application of

character strengths are associated with enhanced well-being, life satisfaction, and resilience. This research examines the relationship between SPS and the 24 VIA character strengths, aiming to provide insights into how SPS influences positive psychological traits. Using the HSP scale (Aron and Aron, 1997) and the VIA Character Strengths Survey (Peterson and Seligman, 2001) data were collected from 204 undergraduate students (61% female). Spearman's correlation analysis was conducted to examine their relationships. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$. Results indicate that SPS is positively correlated with 15 of the 24 character strengths: curiosity, love of learning, open-mindedness, social intelligence, perspective, bravery, honesty, kindness, teamwork, fairness, leadership, prudence, appreciation of beauty, gratitude, and humor. No significant correlation was found between SPS and the following strengths: creativity, perseverance, love, self-regulation, hope, spirituality, humility, forgiveness, and zest. These findings highlight the cognitive and social advantages of high SPS. The significant associations with strengths such as curiosity, love of learning, judgment and appreciation of beauty align with theoretical assumptions that highly sensitive individuals engage in deeper cognitive processing and demonstrate a heightened awareness of their surroundings. Also, the connections with honesty, kindness, teamwork, leadership, fairness, prudence, gratitude and humor reflect a heightened sense of interpersonal dynamics, moral considerations, and social harmony. The results indicate that although SPS is often linked to emotional reactivity, it also fosters strengths that enhance well-being. Future research and interventions can leverage these insights to support highly sensitive individuals more effectively.

*Keywords: Sensory processing sensitivity, highly sensitive person, VIA character strengths.*

# PSYCHOANALYSIS AND PSYCHOANALYTICAL PSYCHOTHERAPY

## CONTEMPORARY VICISSITUDES OF THE OEDIPUS COMPLEX IN ADOLESCENCE

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**Abstract**
This study investigates contemporary developments in sexuality through a theoretical lens grounded in both the Oedipus Complex and the Castration Complex. We analyze data from the Ambulatory for Transgender Care at a public university hospital and conduct clinical observations with five adolescents. While the Oedipus Complex often no longer manifests as it did in Freud's time, associating it with the theory of castration offers a robust framework for understanding unconscious determinations and their role in adolescent experiences today. Three axes structure our research: The first axis is based on a literature review. We refer to psychoanalytic theory on adolescence, positioning it as a critical phase for structuring sexual differentiation and negotiating subjective identity within the division of the sexes, questioning binary identifications. We engage in an in-depth analysis of fundamental concepts by Freud and Lacan to examine the relationship between the Oedipus Complex and the theory of castration. Our hypothesis is that associating these two fundamental concepts provides a better understanding of today's clinical findings. The second axis is clinical. We present five carefully selected clinical vignettes and focus on the narratives of adolescents attending the Ambulatory. Our guiding question is: how does adolescent sexuality, with its contemporary issues of identity and self-construction, contribute new perspectives to psychoanalytic theories of sexuality? We also examine how these cases provide insights into the continued applicability of psychoanalytic concepts to contemporary clinical realities. At the same time, we critically analyze the clinical findings, integrating them with the theoretical framework established in the first axis. The third axis underscores the relevance of classical psychoanalytic theories for understanding the complexities of adolescence in today's context. By linking the Oedipus Complex to the theory of castration, this study addresses cases that raise issues Freud could not have anticipated, given their relative invisibility a century ago. This approach counters criticisms of psychoanalysis as an outdated or obsolete discipline, demonstrating its capacity to engage with and illuminate contemporary clinical challenges.

*Keywords: Psychoanalysis, Oedipus Complex, Castration Complex, adolescence, transgender care.*

# Workshops

# CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

## *de facto* JUVENILE LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE (JLWOP) – HOW JUDGES IGNORE THE LAW

**Michael L. Lindsey**
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**Abstract**
In 2012, the U.S. Supreme Court in *Miller v. Alabama* held that mandatory life without parole sentences for juvenile offenders are unconstitutional. Several years later, the Court in *Montgomery v. Louisiana* determined *Miller* must be applied retroactively. However, *Montgomery* did more than decide the of retroactivity – it expanded *Miller's* holding. The Court ruled that those sentenced as teenagers to mandatory life imprisonment without parole must have a chance to argue that they be released from prison. Following the decision in *Montgomery*, state courts have split over whether the decision requires additional protections for juveniles facing life without parole. States' statutory schemes and appellate court decisions have allowed for the use of *de facto* life sentences for juveniles convicted of homicide as well as nonhomicide offenses. This session will posit that *Montgomery* does in fact mandate additional procedures beyond what many states have implemented. We propose that the time is ripe for courts to determine whether these 'virtual life' terms adhere to the Court's Eighth Amendment prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment.

*Keywords: Juvenile life without parole, JLWOP, juvenile capital murders, de facto life sentences, unconstitutional juvenile life sentences without parole.*

# SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

## OCCUPATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY: BUILDING A FRAMEWORK GUIDING THE APPLICATION OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE INTO FIELD INTERVENTION PRACTICES

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**Abstract**
Applied occupational psychologists support organizations in evaluating and enhancing psychological health in the workplace. Often, these interventions claim scientific legitimacy by using tools based on fundamental research, particularly questionnaires. However, our experience highlights significant methodological weaknesses in these interventions, sometimes questioning their scientific validity. Scientific claims are occasionally used as authority arguments to support an intervention's legitimacy, without reference to a consensus framework linking research to practice. This raises key questions: Can a field intervention truly be scientifically valid or legitimate? How much of scientific knowledge can be applied in practice, and what precautions are needed? Is an empirical approach inherently less legitimate than a scientific one in improving work conditions? This workshop will facilitate an epistemological dialogue between researchers and practitioners to develop insights and recommendations on: Ethical considerations when using research-based tools; criteria for determining an intervention's scientific rigor; and the legitimacy of field interventions beyond scientific anchoring. The workshop is designed to bring together researchers and practitioners in occupational psychology, with a maximum of 50 participants and will use a collaborative method, based on analyzing shared experiences and debating key points. Outcomes will include a guide on ethical and best practices for robust interventions and the complementary roles of scientific tools and empirical approaches.

*Keywords: Occupational psychology, scientific legitimacy, epistemological dialogue, research-to-practice, deontological guidelines.*

# COGNITIVE AND EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

## THE MEANING PROFILE: ITS NATURE AND FUNCTIONS

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**Abstract**
Meaning is a construct with a long history of applications in many disciplines, in each of which it was differently defined. Previous definitions of meaning in psychology focused on behavior, images and verbal responses or associations, which limit the scope of the possible uses of meaning and its assessment. The new proposed definition is based on the assumptions that meaning is communicable, includes an interpersonal and a personal part, and is a multi-dimensional developing construct. The definition is that meaning is consists of units that include a referent to which meaning values are assigned. The six sets of meaning variables are described. They are used in meaning assignment and in coding meaning responses. Coding the responses of an individual to the meaning test that includes 11 stimulus words yields the individual's meaning profile. Meaning profiles can be constructed for groups of people, for personality traits, cognitive acts or processes, values, attitudes, constructs, concepts, people or emotions. The possible uses of meaning profiles in assessment, comparing traits, analyzing constructs, validation procedures and identifying traits are described. The procedure of training of meaning for its expansion or adaptation to particular goals is presented.

*Keywords: Meaning, cognition, meaning profile, personality traits, emotions.*

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