University of Western Australia
School of Psychology

Honours Conference 2014

KEEP CALM AND LOVE PSYCHOLOGY
That's a $300 purse! Your husband doesn't mind you spending that much?

None.

Earlier

Hey, you know what I'd really love to have?

A 10 carat internally flawless diamond ring.

What's that?

Oh, um, well that's uh--

A private yacht so we can sail around the world!

Ya, that's--

Or a Siberian Tiger!

Or maybe just this purse.

Sure. This seems reasonable.

Doghouse Diaries
"We put the tips in toasted "

Bell rings, I get a treat... Bell rings, I get a treat... It went on that way for days. Then, out of the blue... Bell rings, I get nothing at all!! Nada!! I mean, can you seriously call my attack unprovoked?

"The dark truth about Pavlov's dog."
AGENDA
UWA School of Psychology Honours Conference 2014
Monday 29th September

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<td>08.30-08.45</td>
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<td>08.45-10.15</td>
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<td>Industrial &amp; Organisational / Motivation 1</td>
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<td>Social Change / Personality 1</td>
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Prospective Honours students presentation

Venues:
- Tattersall Lecture Theatre (LT) is adjacent to the Bayliss Foyer, on the right.
- Wilmore Lecture Theatre (LT) is adjacent the Bayliss Foyer, on the left.
- G.33 Bayliss is on the right entrance of the Bayliss building.
- G.35 Bayliss is inside the Bayliss building, directly behind G.33.
- 2.33 North Block Lecture Room (LR) is on the third floor of the North Block in the Psychology building.
Head, Developmental Disorders Research Group at the Telethon Kids Institute

Professor Andrew Whitehouse has been working at the Telethon Institute since 2009, having arrived back in Western Australia from the University of Oxford, where he was the Scott Family Junior Research Fellow for Studies in Autism (University College).

Prof Whitehouse has been awarded competitive research funds from national and international funding bodies exceeding $30 million, and he is currently funded by a NHMRC Career Development Award.

Prof Whitehouse directs the Autism and Related Disorders research team, who investigate the genetic and neurodevelopmental causes of developmental disorders such as autism and language impairment, and conduct clinical intervention trials into these conditions.
### G.33 Bayliss Building

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>8:45am</td>
<td>Emme Viney</td>
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<td>9:00am</td>
<td>Benjamin Harrap</td>
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<td>Stephanie Boroughs</td>
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<td>Lydia Thia</td>
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<td>Alix Ringbauer</td>
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<td>10:00am</td>
<td>Billi McCarthy-Price</td>
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<td>11:00am</td>
<td>Ella Modini</td>
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<td>Lewis Cowie</td>
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<td>Georgiana Cheuk</td>
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<td>Joanna Berryman</td>
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<td><strong>12:00-1:00pm</strong></td>
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<td>2:00pm</td>
<td>Teresa Martin</td>
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<td>2:15pm</td>
<td>Yu Ling Lee</td>
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<td>Jonathan Goh</td>
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<td>Nima Farrell</td>
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<td>Luke Antonio</td>
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<td>Li Chang Ang</td>
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### Wilsmore Lecture Theatre

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<tr>
<td>8:45am</td>
<td>Owen Myles</td>
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<td>9:00am</td>
<td>Gideon Sacks</td>
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<td>9:15am</td>
<td>Meg Purton</td>
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<td>9:30am</td>
<td>Sarah O’Brian</td>
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<td>9:45am</td>
<td>Jasmine Kieft</td>
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<td>Krystle Haley</td>
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<td>11:00am</td>
<td>Acacia Crump</td>
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<td>11:15am</td>
<td>Jemma Collova</td>
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<td>11:30am</td>
<td>Samantha Bay</td>
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<td>Ida Best</td>
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<td>Siobhan McNabb</td>
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<td>Kylee Parentich</td>
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<td>Yumfan Gu</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:45am</td>
<td>Kristian Kirkwood</td>
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<td>Angela Italiano</td>
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<td>Grace Fullerton</td>
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<td>Daniel Filippeto</td>
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<td>Nicola Earls</td>
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<td>Ellen Bothe</td>
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<td>Emily Tuckey</td>
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<td>Melissa Tan</td>
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<td>Xujia Wang</td>
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<td>Emily Puckridge</td>
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<td>Sarah Heppell</td>
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<td>Catherine Cleary</td>
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<td>Sim Hui Lim</td>
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<td>Phoebe Berndt</td>
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<td>Caroline Blades</td>
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Investigating the effects of leadership behaviour on employee silence motives

Speaker: Emme Elizabeth Viney  
Supervisor: Sharon Parker

Abstract

Neglected in employee silence literature is an investigation into the relationship between organizational and individual level factors that can influence an individuals motives for silence. The current study aims to address this gap in employee silence research by investigating the influence of two differing leadership styles – authoritarian and servant on six motives for silence. Participants completed a group-brainstorming task, followed by questionnaires concerning their perceptions of leadership behaviour, silence motives, behavioural inhibition and approach; and personality.

Attention Control & Attention Bias: Does attention control underpin changes in attention bias for threat?

Speaker: Owen Myles  
Supervisor: Dr. Patrick Clarke

Abstract

Attention biases to threat are believed to contribute to the development and maintenance of anxiety (Bradley et al., 1999). Attention Bias Modification (ABM) using the MacLeod et al. (2002) dot probe task has been found to be useful in changing attention biases, however individual differences in readiness to acquire attentional biases warrant further investigation (Clarke et al., 2008). This study aims to examine the effects of individual differences in attentional control, both self report & task-based, on bias acquisition from ABM. Implications will be discussed in regards to Attention Control Theory and future research possibilities will be discussed.
Abstract

Prospective Memory (ProM) is our memory for future intentions and is a critical aspect of everyday life. The Prospective and Retrospective Memory Questionnaire (PRMQ) is used widely in research to make inferences about ProM despite vast inconsistencies in the literature with regards the questionnaire’s validity. This study seeks to address this by replicating Crawford’s proposed bifactor model of the PRMQ and to determine if a revised version of the PRMQ provides a better fit to the model. A mixture of 334 polysubstance drug and alcohol using and non-using individuals from the University of Western Australia and the wider community were assessed on the PRMQ. The results supported neither the bifactor model nor the revised version of the PRMQ. These findings indicate that the PRMQ does not measure ProM above and beyond a general memory factor and should only be used to assess general memory.

Abstract

Rett syndrome (RTT) is a rare neurological disorder characterised by a period of regression, loss of purposeful hand movement, and the development of hand stereotypies (Neul et al, 2010). The Rett Syndrome Behaviour Questionnaire (Mount, Charman, Hastings, Reilly, & Cass, 2002) is currently the only measure available for looking at behaviours in RTT, however, this questionnaire contains items that assess not only behavioural but also neurological and physiological characteristics. Literature will be reviewed to provide a theoretical framework to identify items which reflect only psychological behaviours. Data collected through the Australian Rett Syndrome Database will be used to explore cross-sectionally and longitudinally the relationships between age, genotype, and the scores on the behavioural domains. This research will provide the background for the development of a behavioural questionnaire to build on existing literature and provide professionals/carers with improved capacity to understand and identify the spectrum of behaviours and emotions in RTT.
Abstract

The study by Smith, Fehér and Ritt (2014) found that minimal feedback was sufficient to allow pairs of interacting participants to align their use of linguistic terms. Despite this finding, however, the study was limited in two key ways. Firstly, the measure used to examine alignment when tested on English speaking individuals was biased. Secondly, this study did not examine the effect of no feedback on a pair’s tendency to align, as a comparison to the use of minimal feedback. The present study followed the methodology of Smith et al. (2014) whilst taking into account these two limiting factors. Eighty participants completed a written communication task in pairs using an artificial language. This study confirmed the findings of Smith et al. (2014) in terms of alignment. Further, this study found that when no feedback was given, pairs of participants, although to a lesser extent, converged their use of linguistic terms. This finding can provide further insight into the effect minimal feedback has on the process of alignment, where this process occurs between users of natural language.
Effects of machine-triggered automation on a simulated submarine tracking task

Speaker: Benjamin Harrap
Supervisor: A/Prof. Shane Loft

Abstract

The present study compared the effects of two types of automation, static (always active) and machine-triggered (MTA) (activated based on a threshold), on operator performance, situation awareness (SA) and workload using a simulated submarine tracking task. Participants completed three tasks during the simulation, classifying contacts on topographical map, marking the closest point of approach (CPA) for each contact on a location history display, and diving when certain parameters were met. Automation provided assistance for classification and CPA tasks. It was found that static automation benefited performance and reduced workload compared to no automation, and was not detrimental to SA. Compared to no automation, there were no clear benefits associated with MTA for performance, SA or workload. Results confirmed that static automation is of benefit to operators. Lack of significant results for MTA suggests an alternate method of implementation may be appropriate.

Temporal Acuity of Intermediate Vision: Are Low-level processes Limiting?

Speaker: Gideon Sacks
Supervisor: A/Prof Jason Bell

Abstract

Object detection follows a sequential hierarchical model, where information flows from low-levels of processing to high-levels. Past research has found that temporal properties of low-level spatial frequency (SF) tuned mechanisms vary such that lower SFs are processed quicker, but at the cost of spatial sensitivity. This study aims to investigate whether these variations in temporal response properties persist further up the hierarchy, specifically looking at intermediate-level shape processing. A two-alternative forced-choice within-subjects design was employed, where three participants were required to detect radial frequency (RF) patterns that varied as a function of SF and presentation duration. It was hypothesised that at briefer presentation times, RF patterns with lower SFs would be more easily detected than higher SFs. Our results, however, showed the opposite effect. This may be due to the lack of spatial sensitivity associated with low SF information, resulting in poorer discrimination performance when temporal processing limits are approached.
Examining the relationship between selective attention towards negative information and cognitive intrusions

Speaker: Angela Italiano  
Cognition and Emotion Lab

Abstract

Cognitive intrusions are frequently experienced following an emotionally negative event. Two studies examined this association through the experimental manipulation of attention and the monitoring of subsequent CI. 82 undergraduate psychology students were exposed to a brief emotionally negative event, either prior to or immediately following an attentional modification task. They were assigned to one of two groups, either an attend-neutral condition, or an attend-threat condition, and were trained accordingly. Participants kept an intrusion diary, and frequency of intrusions were assessed. Both studies failed to find evidence of a causal association between attentional bias to negative information and cognitive intrusions. Theoretical implications of these findings are discussed.

Autism Spectrum Disorder and Interpersonal Communication: How do Autistic-like Traits Impact the Ability to Collaboratively Solve a Communicative Challenge?

Speaker: Emily South  
Communication Lab

Abstract

Theoretical accounts of the communicative impairments associated with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) have tended to focus on a specific characteristic of the disorder in order to explain communication failure. Separate to this literature, a distinct body of work has focussed on the interpersonal communicative skills of typically developing (TD) individuals and understanding the mechanisms underlying successful communication. Until recently, these areas of research have remained largely distinct. However, it has been suggested that interactive alignment (a mechanism proposed to explain the conversational ease associated with TD interlocutors) might be impaired in ASD individuals and hence explain their communication difficulties. To date, investigation of this suggestion has been limited, thus to further investigate this possibility, and the impact of autistic-like traits on the ability to collaboratively solve a communicative challenge, participants who scored high and low on the Autism Spectrum Quotient (AQ) were recruited for this study. Dyads were matched on AQ and three conditions created: Low/Low (n = 18), High/Low (n = 23) and High/High (n = 24). Dyads then completed the maze game task, requiring participants to collaboratively solve a series of mazes. Success on the maze game task has been suggested to be dependent on the ability of dyads to align their strategies. Hence, it was hypothesised that given the characteristics associated with ASD, the High/High condition would have difficulty naturally aligning with their partners and thus, these dyads would have impaired performance on the maze game task. Results and implications will be discussed.
Abstract

In our interactions with others, the ability to identify expressions accurately helps us to react to situations. Association between expression recognition and social anxiety has been seen in adults and it could be that either individuals with social anxiety tend to avoid faces, or that poor expression recognition tends to lead to social anxiety. It is not yet clear if this association is also seen in children. This study seeks to explore variations in individual differences between expression recognition ability and levels of social anxiety in children between 8 to 12 years old. We expect to find similar associations, as seen in adults, that children with higher levels of social anxiety should perform more poorly on expression recognition tasks. Finding out if there is indeed an association could also help to determine if possible evidence for direction of association exist.
An investigation into the effects of framing on job design behaviour

Speaker: Stephanie Boroughs  
Supervisor: W/Prof Sharon Parker

Abstract

This study examined the effect of framing on job design behaviour and also tested if individual differences such as personality or values act as moderators for the type of job design strategy adopted depending on the type of frame used. Two hundred participants completed two tasks simulating a work design situation and also completed a survey questionnaire to provide insight into their values and personalities. If the hypotheses are supported it may assist in determining whether different people are predisposed to designing jobs using a motivational or mechanistic approach depending on the justification for the job design. Key findings and implications to be inserted later.

Detecting the mood in a crowd: Does the average emotion of a group bias our perception of a happy or angry face?

Speaker: Meg Purton  
Face Lab

Abstract

Previous research has established that humans can extract the average expression from a group of faces. Recent theory predicts that these “ensemble representations” may systematically bias our perception of the individual expressions in the group. Here, I tested this prediction for groups of faces of the same identity (SID) and different identities (DID). Thirty-two participants rated expression intensity of 160 happy or angry faces presented i) individually, ii) within a SID group, iii) and within a DID group. Contrary to the predictions, intensity ratings for faces in SID or DID group were not biased towards the mean expression, relative to individual ratings. However, for happy faces, ratings were overall higher when appearing in a DID group. This effect is reminiscent of a similar finding for facial attractiveness. In a second experiment I examined whether higher attractiveness of the ensemble representation could drive the increase in intensity ratings for happy faces.
Attentional bias to threat: Selective adaptation or cognitive vulnerability?

Speaker: Grace Fullerton
Cognition & Emotion Lab

Abstract

Selective attention to threat is often crucial for survival in unpredictable environments. When control over an upcoming danger is possible, attentional bias to threat is thought to operate in an adaptive manner. In previous research attention to threat was not required for danger mitigation.

113 students from the University of Western Australia completed a computer based task. Each trial included a visual search component and a danger mitigation component, including a 100db white noise burst which represented the danger stimulus. Participants were split into two conditions; based on their trait anxiety and whether they had could mitigate the danger or not. A two way interaction between anxiety and control was significant. These results have implications for the conceptualisation of attentional bias to threat and the treatment of anxiety.

Is the Link Between Attention-to-threat Bias and Anxiety Present in Individuals with High Levels of Mild Autistic Traits?

Speaker: Sarah Heppell
Supervisors: Prof Murray Maybery &
& Dr Suzanna Russell-Smith

Abstract

Research indicates that almost 40% of young people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) have at least one comorbid anxiety disorder (van Steensel, Bögels, & Perrin, 2011), yet there is little research investigating the cognitive mechanisms underlying anxiety in this population.

Individuals with anxiety frequently display a hyper-vigilance toward threatening information, where responses to a target probe are faster in the location of threatening faces compared to individuals with low anxiety. The current study set out to test the recent claim that the effect of anxiety on attention to threat is attenuated in individuals with ASD. First year university students were screened with the Autism Spectrum Quotient (AQ) and the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) to select four groups that systematically differed in levels of anxiety and autistic traits (total N = 80), allowing a comprehensive examination of the attention-to-threat effect. Results and their implications for anxiety and autism literature are discussed, as well as suggestions for future research in this field.
Abstract

It has been a widely held belief that the presence of socially desirable responding (SDR) poses a significant threat to the validity of self-report measures (Day & Carroll, 2008; Dilchert, Ones, Viswesvaran, & Deller, 2006). SDR is the tendency to over-report engaging in socially desirable behaviours and to under-report engaging in socially undesirable behaviours (Holtgraves, 2004). The aim of this study was to explore the effect of SDR on the relationship between self-report and objective measures of both emotional intelligence (EI) and IQ, in order to determine whether SDR is a significant problem for self-report ability measures. This was investigated by asking participants to complete a series of self-report questionnaires and ability-based measures. A total of 207 individuals, aged between 17 and 65 years old, participated in this study. The results showed that the correlation between self-report and objective measures of both EI and IQ increased in magnitude after controlling for the effects of SDR. These findings have implications for the validity and use of self-report measures in both laboratory and real-world settings.
Autonomy orientation: Its impact on prediction and outcomes of relinquishing control

Speaker: Lydia Thai
Supervisor: Prof Marylene Gagne

Abstract

This study seeks to understand and predict how autonomy orientations affect an individual’s decision to be guided by an instructor, and how that decision would affect the individual’s performance in the task. Autonomy orientation stems from two different definitions of autonomy. Deci and Ryan (1985) have defined autonomy as having volition and being able to make choice, with the opposite being controlled. Individuals who are inclined to Deci and Ryan’s definition are reflectively autonomous. Murray (1938), on the other hand has defined autonomy as resisting and defying authority, the opposite of this definition is being dependent and obedient. Individuals inclined to Murray’s definition are reactively autonomous. It is suggested that the different autonomy orientations would affect individuals’ decision to be guided or independent. However, little research has been done to investigate the effects of this decision. A total of 63 students participated in this study.

Number Sense: Determining the Temporal Window of Information Integration

Speaker: Sarah O’Brien
Supervisors: A/Prof. Jason Bell

Abstract

Adults possess a number sense which enables us to make judgements on numerical size in situations that prevent counting. Despite research on the spatial properties of our number sense, the literature lacks understanding of the mechanism’s temporal properties. The current study aims to determine length of time over which integration of number information occurs using two adaptation paradigms. Experiment 1 manipulates the presentation time of individual in the adapting sequence. Experiment 1 results reveal 320ms is the upper boundary for number sense temporal integration. Experiment 2 reveals the number of dots being adapted to within a given time frame by fixing the presentation duration and varying dot number. The current study is consistent with literature indicating temporal integration for static objects is in the order of hundreds of milliseconds.
Do Individual Differences in Attentional Control Modulate the Relationship Between Attentional Bias to Threat and Anxiety Vulnerability?

Speaker: Daniel Filippetto  
Cognition & Emotion Lab

Abstract

Cognitive theories of anxiety posit that attentional bias to threat, and individual differences in attentional control play a meaningful role in the development and maintenance of heightened anxiety vulnerability. The present study sought to investigate this theory by simultaneously examining the patterns of association that these two attentional anomaly share with anxiety vulnerability, and whether individual differences in attentional control would regulate the relationship between attentional bias to threat and anxiety vulnerability. Behavioural paradigms were employed to deliver measures of attentional bias to threat and attentional control using a face dot-probe task and a saccade task respectively, on a sample of seventy-two undergraduate students. Results of a hierarchical regression analysis revealed that attentional bias to threat significantly explained anxiety vulnerability. However, attentional control failed to moderate the relationship between attentional bias to threat and anxiety vulnerability. This is the first study that has sought to simultaneously examine the associations of attentional bias toward threat and attentional control through the employment of behavioural paradigms. Therefore, it would be prudent for future studies to develop more novel attentional behavioural tasks whilst reducing differential method variance with the aim of sensitively differentiating the relationships these attentional phenomena share with anxiety vulnerability.

The Local Processing Bias and its Relationship with Autistic and Anxious Traits

Speaker: Catherine Cleary  
Supervisors: Prof Murray Maybery &  
& Dr Suzanna Russell-Smith

Abstract

A preference for local over global (integrative) processing has been well documented in individuals with autism or high levels of autistic-like traits. This bias has also been observed in those with high levels of state and trait anxiety. Due to the comorbidity between autism spectrum disorders and anxiety disorders, this study aimed to examine whether autistic or anxious traits were more closely related to performance on a number of measures of local and global processing. Participants recruited from UWA and social media were selected for combinations of high or low scores on the Autism Spectrum Quotient and on the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory. The resulting 2x2 factorial design revealed that whilst no significant differences in performance were found with respect to high versus low levels of mild autistic traits, some differences were found between high and low trait anxiety groups.
Abstract

Although biogenetic explanations for depression (e.g., genetic inheritance, chemical imbalance) are associated with decreased blame, they are also associated with increased perceived dangerousness and discrimination over psychosocial explanations (e.g., significant life event, general stress), as well as increased prognostic pessimism (expected symptom duration). However, these issues have only been investigated for adult—not childhood—depression. This study investigated how parents’ biogenetic and psychosocial explanations for childhood depression are associated with their stigma and prognostic pessimism. Parents (n=128) rated their biogenetic and psychosocial explanatory beliefs for childhood depression, as well as their blame, perceived dangerousness, discrimination, and expected symptom duration. Hierarchical multiple regression analyses revealed that explanatory beliefs were not related to stigma. However, more biogenetic explanatory beliefs were associated with longer expected symptom duration (R² = .05, F(2, 126) = 5.53, p < .05; b = .07, p < .01). The theoretical and practical implications of these findings are discussed.
Autonomous Dependence and Autonomy Support: A look at combined effects on ego depletion and task performance.

Speaker: Alix Ringbauer  
Supervisor: Prof Marylene Gagne

Abstract

Autonomous dependent relationships involve the volitional relinquishment of control to a third party. These types of relationships are apparent in many spheres of life; such as putting our lives in the hands of fitness instructors or doctors. The following study aims to look at the effects of such dependent relationships within an experimental setting. Participants became dependent on an instructor to guide them through a novel balance activity. Half of Participants were given a choice as to whether they would like to be guided (autonomous dependence), while half were not given a choice about being guided (controlled dependence). In addition, half of participants were given autonomy supportive guidance, while half were given controlling guidance. Differences between groups on measures of balance activity performance, and self control energy were of primary interest. It was predicted that participants with autonomous dependence and an autonomy supportive guidance would have greater balance activity performance and levels of self control energy. Results and implications will be interpreted and discussed.

Can the effects of cuing on the Attentional Blink be explained by an increase in perceptual sensitivity?

Speaker: Jasmine Kieft  
Supervisor: A/Prof. Troy Visser

Abstract

The phenomenon of the attentional blink (AB), in which two targets are presented within a short time of each other resulting in the second target not reaching conscious perception, has been explained as a result of working memory’s limited capacity. As cuing the timing of the second target has shown to reduce the effects of the AB, and has also independently shown to increase perceptual sensitivity, the current study investigated whether the effects of cuing in AB tasks can be better explained due to an increase of perceptual sensitivity rather than working memory capacity. Comparing a series of blocks of temporally cued trials with blocks of uncued trials found that cuing did reduce the effects of the AB. Using signal detection theory, it was possible to link this AB reduction to a significant increase in perceptual sensitivity, providing a new approach to understanding the cuing effects on the AB.
Executive functioning predicting real world functioning in a healthy ageing population: Self and informant rater measures vs. objective measures

Speaker: Nicola Earls
Supervisor: Prof Carmela Pestell & Assoc Prof Michael Weinborn

Abstract

Executive functioning (EF) is primarily based in the frontal lobes, and encompasses a wide variety of higher-order cognitive processes, which are vital to our everyday functioning. The complexity and breadth of EF has made it difficult to operationalize and measure; as reflected through problems with objective measures, and consequent attempts to address these by using rater measures. Although both index EF, it is widely debated whether they capture the same underlying construct, and furthermore whether they equally predict concepts with confirmed associations to EF; such as daily functioning. This study addressed these issues, using the self and informant forms of The Frontal Lobe Systems Behaviour Scale (FrSBe) and a range of commonly used objective measures. Correlation analyses were used to test the hypothesis that there would be some associations between the FrSBe and the objective measures, particularly between the subscales and objective tests measuring similar behaviours. Hierarchical regressions were conducted to test the hypothesis that the FrSBe would account for additional behavioural and predictive variance in instrumental activities of daily living and medication management, over the objective measures. These relationships were investigated in a healthy ageing population, in order to fill a gap in the literature.

The Effects of History of Ecstasy Use on Event-Based Prospective Memory

Speaker: Sim Hui Lim
Supervisors: Assoc Prof Shane Loft

Abstract

The current study aimed to examine whether prospective memory (PM) deficits in individuals with a history of Ecstasy use are due to problems allocating attentional resources to the PM task. This study was part of a larger test battery that included an event-based PM laboratory task. Participants were required to perform a lexical decision task while remembering to perform a PM task of pressing the “P” key when a syllable (either ‘tor’ or ‘fer’) appeared within the words presented in the lexical decision task. The Ecstasy group had poorer PM accuracy than the control group. However, there was no difference between both groups in response costs (difference in response times between control block and PM block) to the ongoing task. PM deficits experienced by the Ecstasy group are possibly not due to problems in detecting targets, but rather, to problems in coordinating the PM response with the ongoing task.
The Influence of Empirical and Anecdotal Evidence on Individual Climate Change Beliefs

Speaker: Jay Kinkade
Supervisor: W/Prof David Badcock

Abstract

The ongoing discrepancy between expert and public opinion regarding climate change (e.g., Cook et al., 2013) suggests that climate communication requires improvement. The current study (N = 183) evaluated the efficacy of various evidence types in climate communication by presenting vignettes to participants followed by a climate change questionnaire. Evidence types were empirical evidence, locally framed anecdotal evidence (local-anecdotal), and distantly framed anecdotal evidence (distant-anecdotal). Predictions were that exposure to an evidence type would result in greater concern about climate change; empirical and local-anecdotal evidence would have more influence than distant-anecdotal evidence; and there would be an additive effect when anecdotal evidence types were combined with empirical evidence. Partial support was found for the efficacy of empirical evidence, but results did not support the efficacy of either anecdotal evidence condition. Findings highlight the difficulty of constructing efficacious communication in the climate change domain; implications and future research directions are outlined.
"An Examination of the Effects of Safety Climate and Individual Safety Factors on Safety Performance in Mining and METS Industries in Developing Nations"

Speaker: Billi McCarthy-Price

Abstract

Mining and associated Mining equipment, technology, and services (METS) industries in developing countries experience high rates of workplace accidents, despite attempts to improve safety performance (Flin & Yule, 2004). Meta-analyses have demonstrated that safety performance can be meaningfully predicted by an organisation’s safety climate (Clarke, 2006; Christian, et al., 2009), however, there is limited information available on how individual safety factors relate to safety performance. This study aims to assess the relationship between safety climate, individual safety factors, and safety performance, in the mining and METS industries in developing countries, through the development of an experimental model. A survey was distributed to 776 participants in 84 Mining and METS companies, from seven countries. Results seemingly indicate that both safety climate and individual safety factors are positively related to safety performance, with both variables moderated by risk severity and country context. This study will provide important information for researchers developing effective and culturally relevant safety training programs.

Search Asymmetries: Investigating critical features of global shape processing

Speaker: Krystle Haley

Abstract

An essential task of the visual system is to differentiate objects, therefore coding and perception of shape is critical for discrimination. The presence of discontinuities in curvature has been argued to be a critical cue in shape detection and discrimination. However, studies using sinusoidally modulated Radial Frequency (RF) patterns have suggested the polar angle between two points of maximum curvature plays a critical role. This study investigates the critical features that allow shapes to pop-out from one another, indicating they are quickly discriminated, using RF patterns in a visual search task paradigm. Results showed RF patterns absent of curvature discontinuities were discriminable, concluding polar angle as a primary discriminable feature. This feature is also concluded to be labelled in the visual system.
Investigating the Source of Age Related Improvements in Face Memory Tasks Across Childhood

Speaker: Ellen Bothe
Supervisor: Face Lab

Abstract

The ability to perceive and remember faces is crucial to social interaction, and it is well established that face perception is a “special” ability in adults. Children consistently show improvement with age in laboratory face recognition tasks, not reaching adult levels until adolescence. However, there is debate over whether this improvement is due to specific development in the ability to recognise faces, or reflects general cognitive development. For example, one study found that memory improved more steeply for faces than other objects (cars, bodies and scenes). However, a similar study found parallel rates of improvement in memory for faces and other objects (dogs). The current study used recognition tasks to compare memory performance for several categories of objects (faces, cars, human-bodies, dog-bodies, whole-dogs) in five-year olds, ten-year olds and adults to provide additional evidence for or against face specific memory development.

Is attentional bias to threat predictive of cognitive intrusions? A trauma analogue study.

Speaker: Hanaa Idris
Cognition & Emotion Lab

Abstract

Cognitive intrusions, otherwise known as the involuntary re-experiencing of a stressful event. The degree to which people vary in experiencing cognitive intrusions has been a key area of interest for researchers. The research seems to suggest that there is an association between cognitive intrusions and attentional bias to negative information, however whether attentional bias makes a causal contribution has yet to be determined. Two studies were conducted to address this question. The first study aimed to investigate whether attentional bias to negative information causally contributed to intrusions following exposure to an aversive film compilation. 39 first year undergraduate students completed a dot-probe task after exposure to an aversive film compilation. With the use of a smart phone device, they were required to report any intrusions they experienced. The results revealed an effect of attentional bias training, however attentional bias did not causally predict intrusion frequency or distress. A second study, involving 48 first year undergraduate students was conducted to investigate whether attentional bias to threat causally contributed to intrusions before exposure to an aversive film compilation. Once again, the results revealed an effect of attentional bias training, however attentional bias did not causally predict intrusion frequency or distress. The theoretical and practical implications are discussed.
Curbing emissions: The effects of cost-framing and menu-framing on carbon policy preferences.

Speaker: Jemma Hart

Behavioural Economics

Abstract

The effects of framing on carbon policy preferences was examined. Decision makers were required to choose between three carbon policy options in a hypothetical referendum: a zero-cost, no emission reduction policy (business-as-usual); a moderately expensive, shallow emission cut policy (competitor) and an expensive, deep emission cut policy (target). The framing of the options on the menu (menu-framing) was manipulated, such that sometimes the choice set contained an additional policy (decoy) that was superior to the competitor, but inferior to the target. The framing of the costs of the policies (cost-framing) was also manipulated, with costs sometimes being framed as a loss (an out of pocket expense) and sometimes as a foregone-gain (a reduction in a future gain). Results revealed a reliable effect of the menu-framing manipulation only, with decision makers being more likely to choose the target over the competitor policy when the choice set included the decoy policy.
Lateralisation of Cerebral Blood Flow During Arithmetic Task Performances Using Functional Transcranial Doppler Ultrasonography, (fTCD)

Speaker: Ella Modini
Supervisors: Dr Allison Fox

Mathematic ability is considered a key skill for successful day-to-day living and many researchers believe humans have an innate ability for processing mathematical data. There are several cognitive models that attempt to explain this ability to process numbers. The triple code model attempts to link number processing mechanisms with neural substrates, proposing that number is processed via three distinct representation systems, each characterised by specific patterns activation within the parietal lobe. According to the triple code model, number processing which relies heavily on a verbal representation system is characterized by patterns of left lateralised activation, whereas number processing which relies on a quantity representation system is characterized by bilateral activation. Functional Transcranial Doppler (fTCD) ultrasonography offers a cost effective and non-invasive method for investigating these patterns of activation further. A sample of 29 adult participants were tested using fTCD for patterns of lateralised activation during a series of language and arithmetic tasks. Results revealed patterns consistent to those proposed in the triple code model, however the hypothesis of obtaining a significant difference in laterality during the arithmetic task that relied on verbal representation and the arithmetic task that relied on quantity representation was not supported. Plausible reasons for obtaining these results will be discussed and direction for future studies will be proposed.

Critical Regions for Global Shape Processing of a Closed Contour

Speaker: Acacia Crump
Supervisors: W/Prof David Badcock

Abstract

Shape detection and discrimination is fundamental to a variety of tasks, allowing us to locate and identify objects and people within a complex scene. The human visual system is remarkably sensitive to small deviations from perfectly circular shapes, and can combine information arising in different parts of the visual field to create a global object representation. Shape processing is believed to be a hierarchical process involving local and global mechanisms. By removing particular parts in Radial Frequency (RF) patterns, it is possible to determine what parts of shapes are critical for global integration. In this study we test the ability to visually distinguish an RF from a circle and determine whether impairments caused by the occlusions are due to disruption of local or global processing. Following this, we use a reverse correlation technique to investigate what shape properties are most important when making other decisions about the features of a shape, e.g. amplitude and rotation. This study looks to improve and expand on the knowledge examining critical shape boundary features for global integration of shape information.
Exposing SCAMs as a Method to Correct Against Climate Change Misinformation

Speaker: Emily Tuckey

Abstract

More than 97% of domain experts agree that human CO2 emissions cause climate change. However, vested interests undermine this scientific consensus by claiming that climate science is uncertain; a technique called the Scientific Certainty Argumentation Method (SCAM). The current study aimed to examine the effectiveness of exposing the use of SCAMs either explicitly (by documenting their use in the climate change domain) or implicitly (by documenting their use by the tobacco industry) to counter the continued influence of this misinformation. Participants (N = 166) received either: (1) a SCAM passage, a SCAM passage followed by either an explicit- or (3) implicit-correction passage, or (4) no information (control). Results indicated that exposure to the SCAM alone reduced perception of a climate consensus but that this effect could be partially attenuated with the explicit-correction. No effect was found for the implicit-correction. Implications for climate change communication and future research are discussed.

Attentional bias, attentional control, and anxiety vulnerability: Discriminating the validity of alternative hypotheses concerning their functional relationship.

Speaker: Erin Finucane

Abstract

Cognitive research has provided evidence that elevated anxiety vulnerability is characterized by an attentional bias to threat (ABT), and impaired attentional control (IAC). Previously these two anomalies have been studied separately, however the current research proposes a paradigm capable of assessing both attentional control and attentional bias. A dot-probe task was used to empirically discriminate the functional relationship between ABT and IAC, and the manners in which this relationship may contribute to their relationship with anxiety vulnerability, in order to align these two distinguished areas of research. Various hierarchical regressions were conducted to assess the functional relationship between these two anomalies and anxiety vulnerability, using both mediation and moderation regression analyses. In addition to advancing the theoretical understanding in which attentional functioning is influenced by and contributes to heightened anxiety vulnerability, this research will hope to aid in the advancement of cognitive technologies with the capacity to reduce dysfunctional patterns of attention, and potentially to ameliorate anxiety vulnerability through the modification of its attentional substrate.
Can Explicit and Implicit Temporal Cues Attenuate the Attentional Blink and Repetition Blindness?

Speaker: Chloe Maxwell-Smith  
Supervisor: Assoc Prof Troy Visser

Abstract

Attentional deficits such as the Attentional Blink and Repetition Blindness often arise when demands to our visual attention exceed its limited capacity. Previous research indicates that information about the interval between the presentation of visual targets can attenuate a visual deficit called the Attentional Blink. In this study, a series of experiments employed Rapid Serial Visual Presentation of stimuli to examine whether temporal cueing can attenuate a similar attentional deficit, Repetition Blindness. The effect the order of conditions (i.e., temporally cued first vs. temporally cued second) was also considered, in relation to the influence of cueing on deficits. Results could reveal new dissociations between the Attentional Blink and Repetition Blindness, further fueling the argument that the two deficits arise from independent attentional mechanisms. Additionally, the effect of order on accuracy for visual attention tasks illuminates a gap in the literature for future research to address.
the relationship of sensory gating, intelligence and processing speed in children.

Speaker: Lewis Cowie

Neuro Developmental Unit

Abstract

The neurological response to repetitive auditory stimulus is suppressed for efficiency purposes in a process known as sensory gating. Sensory gating is weak in children and has a protracted development until adulthood. Past studies and evidence point to both intelligence and processing speed being positively related to sensory gating in children. It was hypothesised that sensory gating would be positively correlated with both intelligence and processing speed in children, ages 6 to 11. To measure sensory gating, the event-related potentials (ERP) were recorded from a two-tone task, a test designed to invoke sensory gating. IQ and processing speed were also measured. Our child sample showed no evidence of sensory gating. Possible explanations for the absence of sensory gating in this sample will be discussed.

Wilsmore Lecture Theatre

Are You Looking at Me? The Perception of Eye Contact from Own-Race and Other-Race Faces.

Speaker: Jemma Collova

Face Lab

Abstract

Humans are usually better at recognizing own-race than other-race faces, a phenomenon known as the other-race-effect. Recent research has found that individuals are also more accurate at perceiving social signals, such as a person’s age or gender, when the face belongs to a person of their own race. One of the most important social signals in the face is eye gaze. However, it is yet unknown whether the perception of gaze is different for own-race and other-race faces. The present experiment addressed this question by asking 40 Asian and 40 Caucasian participants to classify the gaze direction of Asian and Caucasian faces. Gaze direction varied from unambiguously left-averted, to unambiguously right-averted in very small steps. Initial analyses suggest that participants were equally accurate in discriminating gaze and were equally likely to report direct eye contact from own-race and other-race faces, indicating that gaze perception may be independent of face-race.
Examining the Role of Valence Sensitivity in the Readiness to Acquire Attention Bias

Speaker: Melissa Tan  
Cognition & Emotion Lab

Abstract

Findings from previous studies have shown that an attentional bias (AB) is characteristic of an anxious temperament, and some people are more ready to acquire an attentional bias (RAAB) than others. One factor proposed to underlie this variation in RAAB is valence sensitivity (VS); heightened sensitivity to emotional distinction between threatening and neutral stimuli. VS was hypothesised to be positively associated with RAAB. Seventy-eight undergraduates participated in this study as part of course credit, completed the STAI-T self-report questionnaire, a VS assessment task, and an RAAB assessment task. Contrary to what was hypothesised, results found that VS was negatively associated with RAAB, where individuals with higher VS demonstrated decreased RAAB, and less AB malleability. These findings suggest that VS is a factor that impacts RAAB, and future studies may want to consider how differential levels of VS could lead to changes in RAAB, and subsequently decrease anxiety in individuals.

Attentional Control and Insomnia: a Study of Attention Bias, Rumination and Worry

Speaker: Phoebe Berndt  
Cognition & Emotion Lab

Abstract

Past research has implicated a role of attentional control (AC) and attentional bias (AB) in problems of sleep disturbance, specifically insomnia. While a link between AB and worry in insomnia has been supported in recent literature, the role of the cognitive process of rumination in insomnia has not been investigated as extensively (Harvey, 2002; Harvey & Greenall, 2003). The present study was designed to further examine the role of AC, AB, worry and rumination in the process of insomnia. We aimed to investigate whether a direct relationship existed between AC and insomnia or whether this association was mediated by AB, worry and rumination (individually or combined). Forty undergraduate psychology students across the entire range of insomnia-related sleep difficulties completed a 4-night home-based online assessment. AC, AB and pre-sleep-arousal (worry) were measured each night prior to sleep with daytime rumination and baseline measures recorded during an initial lab based session. To assess sleep outcomes, participants completed a 7-item sleep diary upon wakening each morning.
Abstract
This study examined whether the direction of a person’s head can automatically elicit a shift in another person’s focus of attention. Whilst previous research has investigated head-direction as a reflexive social attention cue, this work has not fully addressed the possible contribution from the eyes, or whether head direction has similar effects when accompanying target stimuli are associated with different tasks. To address these questions, participants (N = 49) were required to detect, locate or identify a target that appeared to the left, right, above, or below an image of head tilted in one of these directions. Although participants were informed that the head’s direction did not predict target location, response times in all three tasks were faster when the head was tilted towards compared with away from the target. Moreover, this effect occurred equally whether eyes remained at the centre of the screen or shifted concomitantly with head direction. Interestingly, however, compared to previous studies, the benefits arising from congruence between head direction and target location arose relatively more slowly and lasted for longer. This suggests that although head direction does elicit attention shifts reliably across situations and stimulus conditions, these effects may not be strictly automatic.
Impact of impulsivity and alcohol consumption on error monitoring: an electrophysiological study

Speaker: Sze Wing Georgiana Cheuk
Supervisor: Dr Allison Fox

Abstract

This study examined whether the direction of a person’s head can automatically elicit a shift in another person’s focus of attention. Whilst previous research has investigated head-direction as a reflexive social attention cue, this work has not fully addressed the possible contribution from the eyes, or whether head direction has similar effects when accompanying target stimuli are associated with different tasks. To address these questions, participants (N = 49) were required to detect, locate or identify a target that appeared to the left, right, above, or below an image of head tilted in one of these directions. Although participants were informed that the head’s direction did not predict target location, response times in all three tasks were faster when the head was tilted towards compared with away from the target. Moreover, this effect occurred equally whether eyes remained at the centre of the screen or shifted concomitantly with head direction. Interestingly, however, compared to previous studies, the benefits arising from congruence between head direction and target location arose relatively more slowly and lasted for longer. This suggests that although head direction does elicit attention shifts reliably across situations and stimulus conditions, these effects may not be strictly automatic.

Wilsmore Lecture Theatre

Human Sensitivity to Bilaterally Symmetric and Asymmetric Contours: Does Symmetry Help to Detect Features?

Speaker: Samantha Bay
Supervisor: Assoc Prof Jason Bell

Abstract

Bilateral symmetry exists almost everywhere in our world and is an important visual cue to the visual system. Humans are highly sensitive to symmetry; therefore, specific mechanisms in the visual system for processing symmetry have been proposed. Models used to explain symmetry detection proposed mechanisms to exist in low-level processes in the visual cortex. Using stimuli that target activation of V1 neurons, we investigated whether symmetry provided an advantage over asymmetry, in detecting contours embedded in noise. In addition, we investigated whether location of contours in the peripheral field of vision influenced detection. Responses in tasks from six participants were recorded in two experiments. No significant main effects were found for symmetry configurations. However, results indicated a relationship between location of stimuli and detection – participants were significantly worse at detecting contours at two oblique locations. A significant interaction was also found between contour perturbation and symmetry.
Moral Profiling of Anti-vaccine Advocates: Using Moral Foundations Theory to Explore Vaccine Attitudes

Speaker: Jessica Sipes

Abstract

While small, the anti-vaccine movement is outspoken, growing in numbers, and influencing decreasing rates of vaccination through misinformation. Not much is known about anti-vaccine advocates and attempts to correct the misinformation spread by them have been unsuccessful. This study aimed to get a better understanding of those with anti-vaccine beliefs. Moral Foundations Theory was used to explore the moral judgements used by people with anti-vaccine beliefs, to create a moral profile of those associated with this movement, and to explore any link to political ideology. Results indicate a connection between anti-vaccine beliefs and reliance on the Liberty foundation with the rights and freedoms of the individual being highly important. Results do not indicate that this group has a political affiliation.

Neuroticism and Suicide Risk: Does Neuroticism Moderate the Effect of Thwarted Belongingness on Persistence in a Simulated Interpersonal Performance Task?

Speaker: Caroline Blades

Supervisor: Assoc Prof Werner Stritzke

Abstract

Neuroticism has been implicated as a risk factor for suicide. Neuroticism may influence suicide risk by moderating thwarted belongingness, one factor thought to causally increase suicidal desire. This study examined if individual differences in neuroticism moderated the effect of induced thwarted belongingness on desire to quit a simulated interpersonal performance task, analogous for the desire to ‘quit’ life. Participants (N = 113) played a reaction-time game with two fictitious ‘co-players’, and received feedback to manipulate the extent to which they felt they belonged to the team. Results showed high neuroticism individuals reported greater perceptions of thwarted belongingness, and consequently, greater levels of desire to quit. This study provides the first experimental evidence that explains a potential mechanism by which the increased risk of suicide for people high in neuroticism might occur. Findings can be applied to assessment and risk management protocols of suicide for patients high in neuroticism.
Speaker: Joanna Alexi
Communication Lab

Abstract

Traditional accounts of communication have largely ignored the influence of individual-level differences in dyads, as an active ingredient of successful communication. However, recent evidence has surfaced to suggest that individual person characteristics, specifically, high empathising and systemising traits, are vital in producing a successful communicative exchange. In contrast, it has been proposed that dyadic similarity on these traits is imperative. Previous studies have lacked the ability to examine these two accounts and therefore the literature has remained divided. Hence, the current study examined these two accounts, by employing a novel communicative maze game task. Additionally, subjects’ personality characteristics were assessed using the Empathising Quotient (EQ) and Systemising Quotient-Revised (SQ-R). Participants were 432 undergraduate students from The University of Western Australia. These participants were then screened for high- and low-EQ and SQ-R, for the purposes of forming our Low-Low (n = 34), Low-High (n = 46) and High-High (n = 36) EQ groups and Low-Low (n = 52), Low-High (n = 64) and High-High (n = 50) SQ-R groups. Based on the individual person characteristics account, it was hypothesised that dyads high in EQ and SQ-R, separately, would outperform dyads low in these traits, on the maze game task. Alternatively, and based on the dyadic similarity account, it was hypothesised that dyads similar in EQ and SQ-R, separately, would outperform dyads dissimilar in these traits, on the maze game task. Our results did not provide support for our hypotheses. Implications will be discussed.
G.33 Bayliss

Speaker: Joanna Berryman

Neuro Developmental Unit

Abstract

Recent research has conceptualised empathy as being comprised of two distinct but correlated affective and cognitive components. Individual differences in empathy level have been found to influence important aspects of human functioning. However research to date on whether individual differences in empathy level affect the processing of emotionally salient information compared to emotionally neutral information is inconclusive. Additionally, recent EEG research has indicated that amplitudes of ERP components theorised to be neural indices of online error monitoring such as the error related negativity (ERN) and error positivity (Pe) may be sensitive to individual differences in empathy. The current neurocognitive study aims to investigate behavioural and neurophysiological differences in processing of affective information in relation to individual differences in cognitive and affective empathy. Forty adult participants' completed empathy measures and EEG was recorded as they responded to an affective face stroop task and a non-affective colour stroop task. Differences in electrophysiological and behavioural measures as a function of empathy level are predicted. Results are to be discussed.

Wilsmore Lecture Theatre

Experimental Evidence for the Effects of Resilience and Hopelessness Within the Framework of the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide

Speaker: Ida Best

Supervisor: Assoc/Prof Werner Stritzke

Abstract

The interpersonal theory of suicide is a prominent risk-based theory that posits that suicidal desire results when extreme levels of two multidimensional proximal constructs are experienced concurrently: perceived burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness. The current study utilises a computer analogue task, which was developed to experimentally induce a sense of burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness, and to measure whether elevated levels of these constructs increase the participants’ desire to quit the task, a proxy for the desire to give up on life. In Study 1, participants (N = 94) were recruited on high and low trait levels of zest for life, a resilience factor. Results suggest that participants with increased levels of burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness had a significantly higher desire to quit the task. Additionally, individuals with high levels of zest for life had significantly lower levels of the desire to quit the task, suggesting a buffering effect. In Study 2, participants (N = 40) underwent a brief resilience induction before completing the main task. Results indicate that participants who underwent an experimental increase in resilience had significantly less desire to quit the task over time than the control. Taken together the results suggest that the study of resilience in suicide research is a promising area both at the level of individual differences and resilience interventions.
**Do You Still Believe in That? Refutations of Dubious Claims**

**Speaker:** Alexander Mladenovic  
**Supervisor:** Assoc Prof Ullrich Ecker

**Abstract**

There is a great deal of misinformation in the form of dubious claims presented in today’s societies; however, the literature has not yet reached a consensus regarding how to most effectively refute these claims. The current study, therefore, aimed to examine the most effective way to refute dubious claims. Fifty-six first-year psychology students were provided with numerous dubious claims, followed by sets of counterarguments (CAs) in response to each claim. The CA sets varied in number (between 0 and 4 CAs) and strength of arguments (from strong to irrelevant). Irrelevant CAs were included as the literature on “doubt mongering” suggests even they can reduce belief in a claim. According to the information deficit model (IDM), it is expected that belief reduction in claims will be greater the more CAs are presented. However, according to complexity aversion theory (CAT), it is expected that belief reduction will be greatest when only few but strong CAs are presented. Results indicated that providing more factual CAs rather than less was more effective at reducing claim belief. These findings support the IDM, and suggest that the provision of more CAs has greater effectiveness in dubious claim refutations.

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**Anxiety and Risk Mitigation; Reducing the Probability of Danger, its Severity or Both?**

**Speaker:** Henry Austin  
**Cognition & Emotion Lab**

**Abstract**

Anxiety-linked bias in risk perception processes have been labelled maladaptive. However, some tasks that involve risk decision making have found that individuals high in trait anxiety show safer, more adaptive decision making. The current study aimed to determine how components of a risk mitigation response (investing a ‘coin’ to avoid a noise burst) are integrated and how this contributed to risk mitigation behaviour. Participants (N=57) completed a coin investment task. Total risk was found to be predicted by a multiplicative relationship between risk severity reduction effectiveness and likelihood reduction effectiveness. Trait anxiety was found to moderate the relationship between total effectiveness and risk mitigation behaviour.
Abstract
Childhood obesity is rapidly increasing worldwide (Önnerfält et al., 2012) and is a public health issue of growing concern (Haynos & O'Donohue, 2012). Where Childhood obesity intervention programs are concerned, one of the most common problems is high dropout or attrition rates (Zeller et al., 2004). This study investigated factors that predict treatment dropout in a childhood obesity multidisciplinary psycho-educational group based family lifestyle intervention program.

The sample consisted of 290 children referred to the ‘Changes in Lifestyle are Successful in Partnership’ (CLASP) program run at Princess Margaret Hospital for Children. Binary logistic regression analyses revealed that adolescent-reported self-concept levels at initial triage significantly predicted dropout at week 10 ($p<.05$). This finding could be used beneficial as a screening measure to identify children and his/her family, as those at increased risk of attrition before commencing the program due to their psychopathology, and also as a protective measure to increase support for those with low levels of self-concept to protect against risk of dropout.
Motivation and performance in an instructor-led activity: Accounting for the role of other-efficacy

Speaker: Teresa Martin
Supervisor: Prof Marylene Gagne

Abstract

The first aim of this study is to examine the experience of autonomous dependence (i.e., choosing to be dependent on another person) in relation to performance and ego depletion within an instructional scenario (i.e., performing a balance task). Self-determination theorists suggest that the performance of behaviours that are autonomously regulated requires less energy than the performance of behaviours that are underpinned by controlled motives. The second aim is to begin to explore the factors that may shape individuals’ experiences within autonomously dependent interactions. This investigation will focus on the role of other-efficacy (i.e., one’s perceptions about an instructor’s competence). Other-efficacy (OE) may influence the types of activities we choose to engage in; how much effort we exert; our attentiveness and reliance on a relationship partner and ones satisfaction with and intention to persist in the relationship. An interaction effect is hypothesised between autonomous/controlled reliance and other-efficacy; where those in the autonomous dependence and high OE condition are predicted to display the most positive outcomes across all groups (i.e., lowest ego-depletion and best performance), and those in the controlled dependence and low OE condition are predicted to display the least positive outcomes. In the current study, it was found that those in the high OE condition reported that they relied more on that guide as compared to those in the low OE condition (F=18.415, DF=1, p<.001). It was also found that participants in the high OE condition more generally recommended the guide (e.g., recommendation to a friend, would use the same guide again) (F=24.838, DF=1, p<0.001). An interaction effect was close to significance (F=4.426, DF=1, p=0.042) where those in the low OE condition experienced more ego-depletion as compared to those in the high OE condition; and this effect was moderated by autonomy, where the effects of OE were dulled when choice (i.e., the experience of autonomy) was given.

Wilsmore Lecture Theatre

Speaker: Siobhan McNabb
Supervisor: Assoc/Prof Michael Weinborn

Abstract

(Not available)
The validity of self-reported Prospective and Retrospective Memory

Speaker: Courtney Weber  
Supervisor: Assoc Prof. Gilles Gignac

Abstract

There is little evidence supporting the Prospective and Retrospective Memory Questionnaire (PRMQ) as a valid indicator of objective prospective and retrospective ability. Socially desirable responding may falsely decrease correlations between objective prospective and retrospective memory measures and PRMQ scores. The purpose of this investigation was to examine convergent validity between PRMQ scores and objectively measured memory and determine the effect of socially desirable responding on self-reported memory. It was hypothesised that; the PRMQ and retrospective and prospective objective memory measures will positively but weakly correlate; Self-deceptive Enhancement, but not Impression Management, will also correlate positively with PRMQ scores; and socially desirable responding will act as a suppressor variable. The prospective memory subscale had smaller correlations with objective prospective tasks compared to the retrospective subscale and objective retrospective tasks. The last hypothesis was not supported. Future research could evaluate the prospective subscale in the PRMQ and research other potential suppressor variables.

Testing the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide: An Experimental Task Measuring How Belongingness and Burdensomeness Affect Suicidality and Investigating the Role of Anxiety Sensitivity

Speaker: Matthew Roberts  
Supervisor: W/Prof. Andrew Page

Abstract

The current study focuses on Thomas Joiner’s interpersonal-psychological theory of suicide (IPTS) (Joiner, 2005). Using a computer-based analogue task, the effects on desire to quit (a proxy measure for desire to quit on life) of the proximal risk factors, being perceived burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness, are empirically tested. In addition, the relationship between burdensomeness, belongingness and desire to quit is examined in groups that are high and low in anxiety sensitivity (AS) in order to investigate the effects of AS on the proximal factors as well as the desire to quit. Participants completed an accuracy/reaction time, team-based task, with two fictional team-mates, which used controlled written and result orientated feedback to manipulate burdensomeness and belongingness. It was found that participants in the high burden and thwarted belonging group have a higher desire to quit. Results regarding AS are somewhat inconclusive, however do suggest a possible protective/risk factor role of AS in regards to Joiner’s theory. Implications of this and aforementioned results are discussed.
Estimating the Effects of Motivation on Test Performance

Speaker: Yu Ling Lee  
Supervisor: Assoc Prof. Gilles Gignac

Research based on the Student Opinion Scale (SOS) indicates that individual differences in test-taking motivation (TTM) has a significant impact on test scores (e.g., IQ and educational achievement). The validity of the SOS as a measure of individual differences in TTM may be questioned, however, because it is administered after participants complete test-taking. Thus, it has tended to assess only situation-specific (state) TTM. Consequently, in this investigation, a newly developed pre-test version of the SOS which better reflects trait TTM tendencies, was employed in addition to the standard SOS. Findings documented that the pre- and post-SOS did not measure identical constructs, and the pre-SOS scores associated with socially desirable responding more substantially than post-SOS scores. However, no correlations were found between IQ scores and both the pre- and post-SOS. Results provide evidence for a distinction between trait- and state-TTM, and suggests that participants’ perceptions of themselves before and after test-taking influences the extent of TTM and socially desirable responding. Theoretical and practical implications will be discussed.

Wilsmore Lecture Theatre

Speaker: Laurence Dean  
Cognition and Emotion Lab

Abstract

(Not available)
**Abstract**

The ability to recognize faces is crucial for human social interactions. In adults, individual differences in face recognition performance are associated with the strength of specialized face-coding mechanisms, namely holistic coding, but are relatively independent of general cognitive abilities. An interesting question is whether individual differences in face recognition in childhood likewise reflect strengths of such specialized face-coding mechanism. The current study examines this question by measuring face recognition performance, the strength of holistic coding, and individual variations in general cognitive ability in 78 8-year-old children. Results showed that individual differences in face recognition ability was not significantly associated with the strength of holistic coding, whereas general cognition abilities such as IQ was found to be a significantly linked to face recognition performance in children. Together, the data suggested that face recognition might not be a highly specialized and independent ability in young children. General cognitive ability might also play a significant role in the developmental stage of face recognition.

**Abstract**

Despite evidence that childhood mental illness is associated with the same damaging stigma that is consistently documented in population-based surveys regarding adult mental illness, there remains only a small body of research regarding the stigma of childhood disorders. One of the few studies assessing the stigma of childhood mental illness compared public attitudes towards child and adult depression, concluding that children may be more stigmatized than adults (Perry, Pescosolido, Martin, McLeod & Jensen, 2007). This study tests these findings by directly comparing ratings from the Australian community (N = 220) of the stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination towards a child or adult with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and depression, and then assesses whether stigmatic attitudes predict a perception of treatment necessity. Results contribute to the stigma literature by indicating that: (1) stereotypes and prejudice are significantly higher towards children with ADHD and depression than adults with ADHD and depression, (2) ADHD is associated with significantly greater stereotypes than depression for children and adults, and increased prejudice for children, and (3) stereotypes predict an increased perception of service requirement from a psychologist for children and adults with ADHD. This study suggests that people in the Australian community stigmatize childhood ADHD and depression more than adult ADHD and depression, and it points to the need for increased research into the negative impact of those attitudes on children with mental health problems and their families.
Valency Theory Revisited in an Applicant Context

Speaker: Jonathan Goh
Supervisors: Assoc Prof Patrick Dunlop

Abstract

This study investigated faking behaviour in simulated high-stakes settings through the lens of Expectancy Theory. It expanded on earlier studies of this theory by manipulating conditions experimentally to observe their effects on individual faking behaviour. High and Low Valence conditions were created to observe their effects on survey responses. Similarly; a Warning/No-Warning condition was created to determine if this would impact faking behaviour. Contrary to the model of Expectancy Theory outlined by Vroom (1964), results seemed to indicate that situation Valence did not appear to influence participants towards dishonest responding significantly higher than chance; although the presence of a Warning did seem to discourage faking behaviour as hypothesized. That results have assumed a pattern contrary to what VIE theory should suggest is an interesting development in itself; suggesting that perhaps a new theory model is required to explain interactions between motivation and behaviour. Possible explanations for why this may be so are discussed; along with their implications for the field.

Wilsmore Lecture Theatre

Speaker: Kylee Parentich
Supervisor: Assoc/Prof Werner Stritzke

Abstract

(Not available)
Valence Sensitivity as a Predictor of Individual Differences in Attentional Bias Malleability

Speaker: Emily Puckridge  
Cognition & Emotion Lab

Abstract

Extended life stressors have repeatedly been shown to differentially elevate people’s anxiety levels although this individual difference is poorly understood. Research has implicated an attentional bias towards negative information in the development of an anxious temperament. Most significantly, it has been shown that presenting contingencies much like those in real life stressful environments, which make attending to negative information adaptive, can induce this bias. However, there is significant variation in people’s readiness to acquire this bias revealing a need for understanding the cognitive mechanisms which underpin this variation. The present study uses a novel task to assess the hypothesis that individuals with greater valence sensitivity to information are quicker to identify negative information and thus develop this attentional bias. Such findings would be significant in contributing to prediction of individuals whom are susceptible to an anxious temperament as well as those who will respond well to therapeutic intervention.

The Interpersonal Theory of Suicide and Self-Efficacy

Speaker: Lisa Jooste  
Supervisor: W/Prof Andrew Page

 Suicide, a major worldwide cause of death, is conceptually preventable; but in practice, successful prevention measures have proven elusive, partly because suicide is difficult to predict. The Interpersonal-Psychological Theory of Suicide (IPTS: Joiner, 2005) is a recent contribution which proposes specific pathways to suicidal ideation and behavior representing potential targets for intervention and prevention. Causal evidence is provided by an experimental paradigm, the Burdensomeness and Belongingness Suicide Analogue Task (BABSAT). The current study extends the duration of this paradigm to test the effects of perceived burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness on desire to quit the task, an analogue for disengaging from life. Further, it provides the first experimental test of the IPTS hypothesis that hopelessness about interpersonal circumstances exacerbates the effects of burdensomeness and belongingness on suicidal ideation. Results indicate the pernicious effects of burdensomeness above belongingness across time. The ‘hopelessness’ hypothesis is not supported by these results.
Student Learning Motivation and Behaviour: A Diary Study

Speaker: Nima Farrell
Accelerated Learning Lab

Abstract
(Not available)

Employment Silence Motives

Speaker: Yunfan Gu
Supervisor: Prof Mark Griffin

Abstract
(Not available)
The Relationship Between Personality and Prospective Memory in Healthy Older Adults

Speaker: Julie Piesse
Supervisor: A/Prof. Michael Weinborn

Abstract

Prospective memory (PM) refers to remembering to enact previously formed intentions in the appropriate situation. Research suggests that the personality variables of conscientiousness, agreeableness and neuroticism may influence PM ability. Increasing age has been found to reduce performance on PM tasks. Different age cohorts report different levels of these three personality traits. Given these relationships, age may moderate the relationship between these personality variables and PM performance. Hierarchical regressions were conducted testing whether personality variables contributed to models predicting PM performance. Moderated regression analysis were conducted testing whether age moderates the personality and PM performance relationship. It was found that neuroticism is able to predict performance on certain types of PM tasks. A main effect of age was discovered on performance on various PM tasks, regardless of personality variables. This suggests that previous findings of relationships between PM and personality may be due to other task or participant characteristics.

Neuroticism, Dysfunctional Sleep beliefs, Subjective Sleep Appraisals and Daytime Functioning.

Speaker: Gemma Healey
Supervisors: Mr Neil McLean

Abstract

Discrepancies between objective and subjective measures of sleep have stimulated research into psychological variables that impact on individuals sleep perceptions. Variables that have been shown to relate to sleep appraisals and reported daytime functioning include Neuroticism, endorsement of dysfunctional sleep beliefs and mood. However, it is unclear how Neuroticism impacts on sleep perceptions. Thus, the current study sought to investigate the nature of the association between Neuroticism and an individuals (a) sleep beliefs and attitudes (b) subjective sleep estimates (c) mood (d) perceived sleep quality (e) perceptions of the waking state and (f) daytime functioning. Results from a path analysis revealed that Neuroticism had indirect effects on perceptions of sleep, and both direct and indirect effects on reported daytime functioning.

Limitations and potential clinical implications are discussed, including the possibility of personality as an avenue for changing subjective sleep appraisals.
Correcting Misinformation: The Role of Source Credibility.

Speaker: Luke Antonio  
Supervisor: Assoc Prof. Ullrich Ecker

Abstract

The Continued Influence Effect (CIE) refers to the finding that people continue to rely on information that has been retracted (i.e., misinformation) when making inferences and decisions. One factor potentially determining the effectiveness of retractions is the credibility of the retraction source, whereby credibility can be separated into the two dimensions of trustworthiness and expertise. However, the available evidence for the importance of source credibility is mixed. Some studies have reported retractions to be utterly ineffective despite arguably high source credibility; other studies have found that trustworthy sources were more effective at reducing misinformation effects than non-trusted sources, but that the source’s perceived expertise played no role. The present study aims to address this conundrum and clarify the role of source credibility, in particular scrutinizing the surprising suggestion that perceived source expertise is immaterial for a retraction’s effectiveness.

The role of prospective and retrospective memory biases in anxiety and depression

Speaker: Samuel Nicholson  
Supervisor: Mr Neil McLean

Abstract

Cognitive models of mood disorders implicate a causal role of cognitive processing biases in the development and perpetuation of unpleasant symptoms. However, the role of specific biases in anxiety and depression is unclear in past literature. The current study aims to examine two memory biases; retrospective bias and prospective bias, in anxiety and depression. It is hypothesised that retrospective, past-oriented bias will be characteristic of depression, whereas prospective future-oriented bias will be characteristic of anxiety. Approximately 90 people were tested; using the Beck Depression Inventory, the State Trait Anxiety Index and memory task aimed at isolating these biases and results analysed using multiple regressions. No effect was found for either bias, but this may have been confounded by a high multicollinearity (.617) between the anxiety and depression measures.
Abstract

Depression is a major focal point for mental health services. It is a highly prevalent disorder affecting approximately 350 million people globally. Despite the availability of effective biomedical and psychological treatments, a large proportion of depressed individuals fail to seek or comply with treatment. To understand this reluctance, this research project investigated the influence of locus of control (LoC) and mood on decision making in regards to depression. Eighty-one first year psychology students (64 female, 17 male) from the University of Western Australia (UWA) completed an online survey designed to assess their LoC, mood, model of depression and help-seeking intentions. This study intended to determine whether LoC influenced an individual's conceptualisation of depression and help-seeking behaviour. Results will be presented and potential implications will be discussed.
Political Attitudes and Their Influence on the Processing of Misinformation

Speaker: Li Chang Ang
Supervisor: Assoc Prof Ullrich Ecker

Abstract

People often rely on outdated misinformation—information originally presented as true but retracted subsequently—to make inferences. This study investigated whether political attitudes would affect the effectiveness of retractions in a scenario involving a singular episode versus a general assertion. A total of 124 undergraduates on the extreme end of Liberal-Labor scale were presented with a fictitious article containing information of (a) a Labor politician involved in embezzlement, or (b) Labor politicians were more likely to be involved in embezzlement. These critical pieces of information were subsequently retracted and participants’ reliance on misinformation was measured using inference questions that would elicit misinformation-related responses. Results revealed a clear difference in the effectiveness of attitude-incongruent retractions among Liberal supporters across the scenarios of singular episode and general assertion. This finding suggests that the effectiveness of attitude-incongruent retractions is influenced by people’s pre-existing attitudes and specificity of the misinformation.

Social vulnerability in bullies and victims: A study of typically developing children

Speaker: Kristel D’Rozario
Neuro Developmental Unit

Abstract

Since bullying has many adverse consequences, a great deal of research has aimed to investigate how risk of victimisation and of being a bully can be predicted. Studies have found that characteristics in children, such as aggressive and disruptive behaviour, anxiety, poor social skills, socioeconomic status (SES) and low self-esteem, predict both risk of victimisation, and likelihood of bullying others. In addition, a new construct known as social vulnerability, has been found to predict victimisation. However, it is not known whether social vulnerability predicts bullying behaviour, thus the current study aimed to examine this. The participants (forty-seven children aged between six and nine-years-old and their parents) completed questionnaires. It was hypothesised that the independent variables (i.e., aggressive and disruptive behaviour, anxiety, low self-esteem, poor social skills and SES) would predict both victimisation and bullying behaviour.

Secondly, it was hypothesised that social vulnerability would independently predict victimisation, but would not predict bullying behaviour. If social vulnerability is found to be a predictor of victimisation, but not of bullying behaviour, while all other independent variables predict both victimisation and being a bully, this could imply that social vulnerability may be what distinguishes victims from bullies.
Interpreting Test Anxiety as a two-dimensional construct?

Speaker: Min Fang Choi
Supervisor: Assoc Prof Patrick Dunlop & Dr Lies Notebaert

Abstract

Test anxiety (TA) refers to the phenomenological, physiological and behavioral response that is associated with testing. Recent researches have hypothesized two components of anxiety that independently account for variance in anxiety scores. These two components are anxiety reactivity (AR); the probability of experiencing anxiety symptoms, and anxiety perseveration (AP); the persistency of the experience anxiety symptoms. Numerous studies have found TA to be negatively correlated with test performance. However, no known study has examined the direct effect of AR and AP on test performance. The present study aims to investigate the links between TA and test performance by considering this new conceptualisation of general anxiety that has been under-investigated.