

MUHLENBERG COLLEGE

Psychology Day



SPSS Data Editor

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| 17 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
| 18 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 5.50 |
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| 20 | 1.00 | 2.00 | 7.00 |
| 21 | 2.00 | 1.00 | 5.50 |
| 22 | 1.00 | 2.00 | 7.00 |

SPRING 2009 PROGRAM
April 28, 2009 Moyer Hall

NOTES

SCHEDULE OVERVIEW

4:20 - 4:40 Miller Forum, Moyer Hall

WELCOMING REMARKS

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Karly Rodriguez & Kaitlin Merritt ('09)

RESEARCH: What is it Good For?

This talk explores the potential for undergraduates to promote social justice through research. Individual Honors Theses will be discussed along with the empowering experience of presenting our Honors Theses at the conference for the Association for Women in Psychology. Overall, we hope to encourage psychology majors to participate in personally meaningful research and to take full advantage of the resources the Muhlenberg psychology department has to offer.

4:40 - 5:00 Break/Poster Viewing, Miller Forum

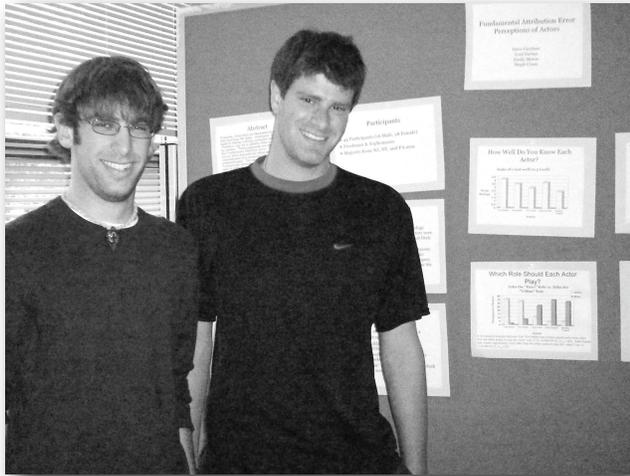
CONCURRENT PRESENTATION SESSIONS

4:40-6:30 Posters - Miller Forum

5:00-6:35 Paper Session A - Moyer 104

5:05-6:35 Paper Session B - Moyer 109

(SNACKS & BEVERAGES AVAILABLE THROUGHOUT THE EVENT)



DETAILED SCHEDULE & ABSTRACTS

Paper Session A

Moyer 104

5:00-5:15

WHO'S HAVING THE BEST SEX?: SELF-ESTEEM AS A PREDICTOR OF SEXUAL SATISFACTION

Melissa Smith, Cortney Toth, Kiera Bianchini

There is a considerable gap within psychological literature regarding sexual satisfaction defined as more than merely a construct pertaining to body image and physical attributes, as well as the exploration of such within non-clinical populations. As a result, the aim of the present study was to examine sexual satisfaction in terms of instances of arousal, pleasure, and orgasm as it relates to the "average" college students' level of self-esteem. Our results indicate that a higher level of sexual satisfaction is positively correlated to reported level of self-esteem. These findings suggest that bolstering one's self-esteem could positively affect his or her respective sexual satisfaction, and also point future research in an innovative direction.

5:15-5:30

THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG THE FEMINIST IDEALS OF EGALITARIAN RELATIONSHIP SAND SEXUAL ASSERTIVENESS TO ROMANTIC SATISFACTION

Amanda Bernecker and Kaitlin Merritt

Modern college-aged women rarely define themselves as feminists for fear of being unappealing to men or labeled a lesbian. Some research, however, suggests that endorsing a feminist identity is associated with more satisfying relationships for both men and women. The current study aims to reconcile past research that has produced conflicting evidence regarding the relationship between feminist identification and sexual satisfaction and assertiveness. Utilizing a survey design, we anticipate that sexual assertiveness and endorsement of feminist values will be associated with greater relationship satisfaction in both men and women.

5:30-5:45

ATTITUDES OF PRENATAL TESTING AND DOWNS SYNDROME

Katie Bemis, Emily Morse, Catherine Ruscitti

Little is known regarding the effect of personality on one's decision to terminate a pregnancy prenatally diagnosed with Down Syndrome (DS). McCoyd (2007), however, found religion to be a significant factor in women's decision to terminate. Bryant, Hewison, and Green (2005) found that perceived burden of caring for the child affected participants' decision to terminate a fetus with DS. Also, Lawson (2006) found those who believed parenting a child with DS would result in less personal enrichment were more willing to abort. Although past research suggests a relationship between negative perceptions of DS and one's decision to terminate a fetus with DS, it has not been tested experimentally. Results of this study may act to inform the public of the benefits of thorough genetic counseling.

(Break)

5:50-6:05

RISKY SEXUAL BEHAVIOR IN RELATIONSHIP TO SELF-ESTEEM AND EXERCISE HABITS

Julie deLaurentis, Kristen Sabia, Suzanne Wasserman, Samantha Johnson

Sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy is a growing concern in today's society. Researchers are interested in studying what factors play a role in why individuals engage in risky sexual behaviors. Most research has only studied one factor at a time; however, it is the goal of this study to examine self-esteem, exercise, and risky sexual behaviors. There was a total of 51 participants from a liberal arts college in northeastern, Pennsylvania. There were three questionnaires that were created for the purpose of the study including, an exercise habits scale, Rosenberg self-esteem scale, sexual habits scale, and demographics. The results of the study showed that there were no significant relationships between self-esteem, exercise, and risky sexual behaviors.

6:05-6:20

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND PERSONALITY

Christine de Benedictis and Amanda Tompkins

Promiscuity on a college campus has been shown to be linked with extraversion. Additionally, research has suggested that high levels of sexual promiscuity is may be correlated with a fear of intimacy. This study examines the correlations that exist between personality, sexual promiscuity, and fear of intimacy on our campus. Sixty-five participants were asked to complete a three part survey that assessed these three variables. The experimenters expect these three will vary together, meaning as extraversion increases, we expect promiscuity will increase and possibly intimacy issues, as well. The results of this study may have implications for understanding how personality plays a role in interpersonal relationships and to whom safe sex education is tailored.

6:20 - 6:35

INVESTIGATING THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN DRUG USE AND RELATIONSHIP STATUS

David M. Weiss

Past research has found that drug addiction and social pair-bonding occupy the same neural pathway. The present study examined possible connections between drug use frequency and relationship status in college students. Thirty-four college students filled out two clinical surveys that assessed their drug-use frequency and their relationship status/involvement. While it was hypothesized that students in more stable relationships would use drugs less than those in unstable relationships or in no relationship, the results indicated otherwise. Comparing participants in relationships, those with more stable, more involved relationships reported a higher frequency of drug use. The findings of the present study add to a new wave of research that examines drug use from a social perspective.

Paper Session B

Moyer 109

5:00-5:15

THE EFFECT OF FALSE AND REAL MEMORIES ON PRODUCT LIKABILITY AND RECALL IN ADVERTISING

Lauren Bernstein, Danielle Coluccio, Avrit Rubin, Jon LeComte

Previous research has shown false memories can be created through advertisements. These false memories are believed to be as real as an actual memory. Evoking a positive memory has been shown to make a product more likable in advertising. Current study evoked a real, false and no memory through advertisements and measured likability and details remembered about a product. The real memory condition described a trip to Disney while the false memory condition described a trip to a fictional theme-park, Safari Kingdom. All three advertisements sold a camera. Gender was also compared. Overall, those in the real memory condition rated the product higher, but the no memory group recalled the most details. The manipulation was not successful and no false memory was created.

5:15-5:30

VISUAL AND KINESTHETIC DISTRACTORS IN MEMORY RECALL

Samantha Crist, Valori Ferrigno, Dana Glassman, Lindsey Grom, Adam Hirsh

Past research has examined the effects of visual and auditory distractors on working memory. Banbury et. al. (2001) found irrelevant sound breaks through selective attention impaired cognitive performance. Similarly, it was found that extraneous visual cues impaired recall performance on a memory task. The present study aims to examine memory and distraction; however, unlike previous research this experiment studied the effects of both visual and kinesthetic distractors. Participants were randomly placed into one of four conditions in which they had to perform a word recall task. We hypothesized participants experiencing no distraction would display the highest level of recall, participants exposed to both visual and kinesthetic distractors simultaneously would exhibit the lowest level of recall, and participants only distracted kinesthetically would do better than those distracted visually but worse than participants who were not distracted at all. Our hypotheses were partially supported with participants in the no distraction condition outperforming all others.

5:30-5:45

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE BALANCE TASK PERFORMANCE ON NINTENDO WII

AJ Barnold, Jessica Gushee, Lori Kerzner, Nikki Lapin

his study examined gender differences in balance and spatial abilities, as well as whether athletic ability affects these differences. Previous research shows that men tend to outperform women in visuospatial tasks, and that boys are more biologically and developmentally predisposed to athletic ability than girls, leading to better spatial ability later in life. Participants completed a Table Tilt task on the Nintendo Wii and then completed a Mental Rotation Task and a survey. Results will be analyzed in terms of gender and athleticism differences, as well as the interaction between these. We suggest that male athletes will perform the best, and female non-athletes the worst. Of particular interest is which of the remaining groups will perform better, male non-athletes or female athletes.

(Break)

5:50-6:05

THE EFFECTS OF PERSONALITY AND GENDER ON ADDICTIONS

Allison Gadon, Alison Long, Mary Samot, Stacey Zimmer

This study examines the effects of personality and gender on addictions. Participants rated their levels of addiction to eight activities and five substances and completed a personality inventory, which was used to determine each subject's score on the introversion/extraversion scale. Introverts and extraverts exhibit different levels of arousability, with introverts needing more stimulation and extraverts needing less stimulation to reach the same level of arousal. Because women are more likely to be extraverted, the researchers hypothesized that women would be more likely to be addicted to stimulants and men would be more likely to be addicted to depressants. The data did not support the hypothesis in that there was no gender differences found for extraversion; however, significant gender differences were found for addiction, with women more addicted to stimulants and men more addicted to depressants.

6:05-6:20

THE EFFECTS OF DIVORCE: PERCEPTIONS OF ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

Sarah Goldberg, Erin Herman, Sarah Rutstein And Ariel Unger

The current study explored how parental divorce can influence student perceptions of romantic relationships. Participants read three vignettes depicting a conversation between a couple. One conversation portrayed a positive discussion, one a negative discussion, and one a neutral discussion about evening plans. After reading the vignettes, participants answered questions regarding their beliefs about the relationship depicted in the vignettes. Lastly, participants completed a thorough demographic questionnaire about. Results showed that women from divorced families had more negative ratings in the negative and neutral vignettes than men from divorced families. Future research should investigate why this gender difference was found.

6:20-6:35

EXPLORING THE LIMITATIONS OF VICARIOUS DISSONANCE

Brittany Barton And Emily Sidway

Cognitive dissonance is one of social psychology's most influential theories describing the change in one's attitudes. Based on the theory of cognitive dissonance, Norton et al. (2003) researched an extension naming it vicarious dissonance. This new theory suggests that a person experiencing an in-group member behaving counterattitudinally will feel that person's dissonance and, as a result, change their own attitude. Our study seeks to test the limits of the theory of vicarious dissonance. We propose that argument strength moderates the impact vicarious dissonance has when a person experiences an in-group member behaving counterattitudinally.

Poster Session Miller Forum

THE INFLUENCE OF PERSONALITY AND PHYSICAL ATTRACTION WHEN CHOOSING A ROMANTIC PARTNER

Jill Paganelli, Sydney Miller, Brodie Main and Alyssa D'Addio

We conducted a study in order to see if women rated physical attractiveness or personality as being more important in engaging in a romantic relationship. We predicted that women would rate physical attractiveness as being more important than personality. In order to test this hypothesis we had four separate surveys each included a picture of a male (attractive or unattractive) and a personality description (positive or negative). We had four different conditions (attractive male with positive personality, attractive with negative personality, unattractive with positive personality and unattractive with negative personality). Participants were 53 Caucasian, heterosexual, female college-aged students. We found that there was no significant interaction between personality and physical attractiveness on likelihood of engaging in a romantic relationship.

THE EFFECT OF DISCLOSURE ON FACULTY ATTITUDES TOWARDS ACCOMMODATIONS

Samantha Busa, Alexa Rosenberg, Ryan Shaughnessy

In this study we investigated whether faculty attitudes towards disability related accommodations changed due to disclosure of specific learning disabilities. Faculty members were asked to look at a mock situation in which a student presented the necessary accommodations in the classroom. We predicted that if a faculty member is given information about the disorder the student has, faculty would be more comfortable providing accommodations. We also predicted that disclosure would increase faculty confidence in the accommodations. By learning how faculty members view accommodations after disclosure, students have the ability to have better working relationships with faculty. Also, this may help to decrease stigma towards accommodations and show the importance of accommodations for students.

PERCEPTIONS OF FACEBOOK PROFILE

Nicole Baumgartner, Alixandra West, Melissa Wolpow

We examined the differences in individuals' perceptions of a person depending on his or her Facebook profile picture. Specifically, we examined differences in attractiveness of the individual in the picture based on whether or not alcohol is present in the profile picture. Students at Muhlenberg College received an online survey that consisted of a picture of either a male or a female's Facebook page, as well as questions pertaining to the Facebook that the participants just viewed. We expect that participants will perceive the male and female drinkers as more attractive than the male and female non-drinkers. However, of the two drinking profile pictures, participants will view the male as more attractive than the female.

EFFECTS OF MOOD ON TEST PERFORMANCE

Jennifer Raimo, Darren Cole-Henry, Carl Lynch

The objective of this study is to shed light on the effects of social facilitation in a test-taking environment. Evidence suggests that the presence of a third party observer leads to poorer performance on certain tests of executive functioning, but there is little literature on socially facilitated pressure/anxiety that can be induced by the presence of other test-takers. We used confederates to stimulate anxiety by handing in the test far earlier than the actual participants in the experimental condition, and for the control the confederate waited until the others finished to hand his/her test in. We expect the results to show that problem solving scores and test completion time will decrease in the anxiety induced condition when compared to the control condition with no induced anxiety.

FORMING FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Christina Cho, Cristina Steglitz, Patti Rabinowitz, Dana Shuldiner

This experiment examined the influence of clothing color on forming first impressions. Participants were randomly assigned to one of six different conditions of a male or female model in a red, blue, or yellow t-shirt. The relationship between the conditions and certain characteristics (intelligence, approachability, intimidation, and attractiveness) was investigated as well as the levels of participant's assertiveness. The interaction between the gender of the participants and the gender of the model was also examined. It is anticipated that yellow will be linked with approachability, blue with intelligence and intimidation, and red with attractiveness and intimidation.

THE EFFECT OF AVERSIVE RACISM ON THE OWN RACE BIAS

Jake Freeman, Hanna Glidden, Chris Lewis, Alex Ripkin

Our study was meant to measure the Own Race Bias which states that people have a tendency to recognize faces of their own race more than faces of a different race. We were also looking at the effect of aversive racism. Our study consisted of a slideshow presentation of both black and white faces. They were then told to fill out a brief computer anxiety survey as a filler task. They were later asked to identify a handout of faces and indicate if they had seen the faces before in the slideshow. We concluded with a multi-cultural survey. There were two conditions, the no prime condition and the racism prime condition. We predicted that participants in the no prime group would experience the own-race bias and participants in the racism prime group would recognize more faces of other races.

RACIAL AND GENDER STEREOTYPES IN COMMENTARY ON COLLEGIATE SPORTS

A.J. Barnold

Racial and gender stereotypes have been found to be prevalent in the commentary of professional and collegiate sporting events. Games from the men's and women's NCAA Final Four basketball championship were analyzed and coded for stereotyped language used by the commentators in describing the play of athletes from different racial groups and genders. It is hypothesized that black athletes will be more frequently described as more athletic and possessing greater ability, while white athletes will be described as more intelligent and hard working. Additionally, the physicality and ability of male athletes will be referred to more frequently than that of female athletes. Also of particular interest will be the interaction between race and gender in terms of which aspects commentary focuses on.

DRINKING BEHAVIOR IN COLLEGE STUDENTS

William Alosco, Laura Nelson, Sarah Illing

There are contradictions in the research associated with the subject of social anxiety and the question of why college students binge drink. One side shows that college students with high levels of social anxiety will be more likely to drink in social situations such as a college party. Another side shows that college students with high levels of social anxiety are less likely to drink. The reason for this contradiction is hypothesized to be due to college students who have a high need for control not drinking in order to keep that control. This study examines the relationship between social anxiety and binge drinking using the Liebowitz Social Anxiety scale and an Alcohol Questionnaire. To test the contradictory research the Spheres of Control scale was used to see if there was a correlation between a need for control and low levels of alcohol consumption. The results are hypothesized to show that there is a positive correlation between frequency of binge drinking and level of social anxiety. They are also hypothesized to show that there is a negative correlation between need for control and alcohol consumption. Since alcohol related deaths are high in college students preventing binge drinking by treatment of social anxiety could potentially be effective in lowering the rate of alcohol deaths in college students.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JEALOUSY AND SOCIOSEXUAL ORIENTATION ON PRIOR EXPERIENCES WITH INFIDELITY

Dana Baboulis-Gyscek, Lauren O'Donnell, Ella Retterer and Jill Feldman

There are a number of different factors that influence relationship infidelity. Evolutionary theory states that men will be more jealous of sexual infidelity, and women will be more jealous of emotional infidelity. Our study wanted to test to see if there was a correlation among jealousy, sociosexual orientation, and past relationship infidelity. Participants were given a survey measuring past experiences with infidelity, jealousy, and sociosexual orientation. We hypothesized that men will be more likely to cheat on their partners; that people that have an unrestricted sociosexual orientation will be more likely to cheat partners; and that men that are high in jealousy will be more likely to cheat, while women who are high in jealousy will be less likely to cheat on their partners.

STRESSING OVER SPACE: THE EFFECTS OF PERSONAL SPACE VIOLATIONS ON WORKING MEMORY AS MODERATED BY PRACTICE

Jason Boulter, Nikki Machrone, Emily Turpin, Laura Sukonick

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of practice on working memory in the presence of a personal space violation. Participants completed an abridged version of the Corsi block Tapping Test. The test consisted of participants viewing a pattern of blocks on a powerpoint slideshow and then replicating that pattern. It was hypothesized that participants would do better at the task if the personal space violation was presented after the test had been completed several times.

WHITE RACIAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AND EATING DISORDERED BEHAVIORS

Karly Rodriguez

Research on eating disorders has consistently found that white women have higher rates of eating disorders than black women. This study will focused on white racial identity development as a possible predictive factor for eating disorders within white culture. White racial identity development is the degree to which a person has critically evaluated what it means to be white and has developed a non-racist white identity. A survey was administered to white women who were students at Muhlenberg College. White racial identity development was measured using The White Racial Identity Attitude Scale (WRIAS) and other possible factors such as Multicultural exposure and socioeconomic status were assessed using self-report measures and retrieving demographics from the participants' town and high school. The EAT-26 was used to measure disordered eating behaviors. Results supported the hypothesis showing that obliviousness to racism significantly predicted eating disordered behaviors.

ACTING THE PART: A STUDY OF MALE SOCIAL ROLES

Daniel Brennan, Heather Kaufman, Melissa Martin, Kate Mullin

Stereotypes are preconceived ideas that certain characteristics pertain to all members of a social group. However, these stereotypes change depending on a person's social role. Pertaining to men, it was found that gay men who hold typical female roles are seen as more feminine than gay men who hold traditional male roles. The present study hypothesizes that men will be more accepted by the social world when a stereotypical social role is held. Seventy-two college students read a case study of a 22 year-old male college student that was either gay or straight, a football-player or an actor. They rated the character's masculinity and femininity, as well likeability. It is anticipated that the gay actor and straight football are the most favorable.



WANT TO PRESENT YOUR RESEARCH OR INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE?

Fall 2009 Psychology Day is tentatively scheduled for December 8. If you would like to present your research or internship, speak with a professor and/or visit the Psychology Department website for more information!

ABOUT PSYCHOLOGY DAY

Psychology Day is an opportunity for students from all class years to present and discuss findings from the research or internship projects they have conducted that semester or year. New majors can look ahead to the types of research conducted in Research Methods, Advanced Lab, Research Apprenticeships and Independent Studies. More senior majors can look back, note their own intellectual development, and mentor younger students. The student presenters are practicing valuable communication skills. Most of all, students (from any major) and faculty join together as colleagues to celebrate student research.

CONDUCTING RESEARCH

Learning how to conduct empirical research is central to the education of the psychology major. Through research experiences, psychology students strengthen their critical

thinking skills and develop systematic, rigorous ways of thinking about people.

Research in Courses

Students are introduced to research in Introductory Psychology. This foundation continues through the rest of the major, including Research Methods and Advanced Lab. In these courses students develop a unique hypothesis and design a research study to test it. They then follow-through by running, analyzing and presenting the study.

Research Apprenticeships

Many students (freshmen through seniors) work with faculty members as research assistants and collaborators. After an apprenticeship, students also often develop their own research ideas and go on to Independent Research or Senior Theses.

Independent Research

We encourage juniors and seniors in particular to consider Independent

Research. Students work closely one-on-one with a faculty mentor in developing and implementing their ideas. Seniors looking for a year-long, intensive experience are encouraged to pursue a senior thesis. Any type of research, but especially independent theses such as these are very positive additions to a graduate school application.

INTERNSHIPS

An internship is a work experience characterized by intentional learning. During this experience, the student assumes a responsible role in an organization and actively reflects on what he or she is observing and learning. Psychology students have held internships in many different settings.

MORE INFORMATION

Visit the Psychology Department website and follow the link for "Resources for Current Students."