

MUHLENBERG COLLEGE

Psychology Research Day

SPRING 2007 PROGRAM

May 1, 2007 Moyer Hall

SCHEDULE OVERVIEW

4:20 - 4:50 Miller Forum, Moyer Hall

Welcoming Remarks

Keynote Speaker, Dr. Katherine Richmond

Considering the "So what?" Question: Research as a social change agent

The term "public health" has often been associated with preventive programs aimed at minimizing the spread of infectious diseases, such as STDs or malaria. However, the World Health Organization (WHO) has deemed "mental and social well-being" a critical component of public health. The aim of this key note address is to call attention to the ways in which psychological research can inform public health policies, and thus can serve as a powerful tool to enhance the quality of collective and individual lived experiences. By highlighting several of my own specific research endeavors, I hope to create a forum where participants can consider how (and if) their research at Muhlenberg College contributes to the public health mission set forth by the WHO.

4:50 - 5:00 Break

CONCURRENT PRESENTATION SESSIONS

4:50-6:30 Posters - Miller Forum

5:00-6:05 Paper Session A - Moyer 104

5:00-5:50 Paper Session B - Moyer 109

(break at 5:30)

(SNACKS & BEVERAGES AVAILABLE THROUGHOUT THE EVENT)

DETAILED SCHEDULE & ABSTRACTS

Paper Session A

Moyer 104

5:00-5:15

THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PERSONALITY TYPE, MOOD STATE, AND FOOD PREFERENCES

Madeline Prager, Kori Long, Elana Rabinowitz, Kate Carroll, Justin Kennard

We wanted to investigate the relationships between mood, personality, and food preference. We hypothesized that extroverts would be more likely to use stimuli in their environment (food) to self-regulate mood. We predict that in a sad condition sweet foods will be rated as most appealing overall by both extrovert and introverts. We also predict that extroverts' food preferences will be more affected by the mood manipulation than introverts. In this study, we manipulated mood using a sad or happy film clip, and then assessed participants' levels of extraversion, emotional stability, and food preferences. Level of extraversion and emotional stability were measured using Eysenck's Personality Inventory. Participants rated how appealing certain categories of foods were (1=not all appealing, 5=extremely appealing). The categories included salty, sweet, spicy, and overall hunger. In general, the results supported our hypothesis and predictions of the experiment.

5:15-5:30

GROUP, SOLO AND GENDER MODES AT A POPULAR RESTAURANT CHAIN

Kevin Richter, Maritza Acevedo, Alyssa Katz, Emily Lefevre, Nancy Oswald

Patrons of a popular, up-scale restaurant were evaluated for occurrences of single male and female diners compared to groups. Fewer individuals were expected to be dining alone, and the results supported this hypothesis. Further, it was theorized males would be more likely to dine alone than females. Though this was confirmed during mealtime, an interesting finding was that a sole patron was much more likely to be female during the afternoon hours, between lunch and dinner.

(Break)

5:35-5:50

THE EFFECT OF FERTILITY AND SCENT ON PERCEIVED MALE ATTRACTIVENESS

Christina Marie DiLiberto, Ashley Kaplan, Jenn Kuhn, Chelsea Meenan

Thirty-six female college students were shown five pictures of the same man's face, with different masculine or feminine features exaggerated in each picture. Participants were asked to rate the attractiveness of the men and then completed a personal questionnaire about their menstrual cycle, relationship status, sexuality, use of oral contraceptives, etc. Participants were either in the musk, floral, or no scent condition, in which the room was sprayed with one of those fragrances. Preliminary results support our hypotheses that women who are in the fertile stage of their menstrual cycle will prefer the more masculine men more than the non-fertile women will, and that fertile women in the musk condition will like the men more than fertile women in the floral condition.

PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH DAY

5:50-6:05

STUDY HABITS: ARE THERE MEMORY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN WRITING OR TYPING NOTES?

Elisa Vicari, Kate Sawyer, Chris Musselman, Hilary Marinchak

We hypothesized that participants in the writing condition would have better recall than those in the typing or reading condition. Participants were presented with a list of words and their definitions in each of the three conditions (writing, typing, and reading) and then given a distracter test. Lastly they were given a list with the definitions and asked to recall the words. Our results did not support our hypothesis. Participants in the reading condition actually had the best recall. This can be attributed to the small period of time allowed for the studying or memorizing of the words.

Paper Session B

Moyer 109

5:00-5:15

PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD INCLUSION

Lily Hatfield, Amanda Palmer, Lindsay Scott

Pre-service teachers tend to have altered attitudes towards the educational practice of inclusion, after relevant coursework and exposure to individuals with disabilities. This exposure can be obtained through coursework, textual information, fieldwork, and/or life experiences. In this study, experimenters examined whether the course, Exceptional Learner, at Muhlenberg College alters pre-service teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. Exceptional Learner is designed to broaden the pre-service teacher's knowledge and understanding of students with disabilities, (Muhlenberg College Catalogue, 2006-2007). The purpose of this study is to examine whether those who have taken any course, specifically designed to educate pre-service teachers about teaching students with disabilities, have differing attitudes from those pre-service teachers who have not. Participants in this study include all education students currently enrolled in an education department course, excluding Exceptional Learner. To demonstrate their current attitudes, participants completed a survey, as well as demographical and qualitative questions.

5:15-5:30

ASPERBERG'S DISORDER VERSUS AUTISTIC DISORDER: CLINICIAN DIAGNOSIS AND ATTITUDES

Carey Heller

Previous research has suggested that Asperger's and Autistic Disorders may not be distinct conditions, despite being listed as such in the DSM-IV-TR. Many argue that the current criteria complicates the diagnosing of these disorders. Evidence has shown that clinicians give a diagnosis of Asperger's Disorder even when Autistic Disorder is warranted based on the DSM criteria. Perhaps social stigmas attached to the disorders and beliefs about whether the two disorders are distinct conditions play a role. In the present study, clinicians diagnosed a vignette and answered questions that assessed their attitudes and beliefs about the two disorders as well as assessed their diagnostic practices. The results indicated that some clinicians do not adhere strictly to DSM-IV-TR criteria when making diagnoses. Furthermore, clinicians believe that a diagnosis of Asperger's Disorder is less stigmatizing than a diagnosis of Autistic Disorder.

PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH DAY

(Break)

5:35-5:50

WANTING VS. LIKING IN GAMBLING AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

Jared Mazzei

Past research has suggested that losing creates just as much arousal as winning. For this reason, it is important to find out why such gamblers continue to gamble even though it may result in a punishment. There are three main reasons given for gambling sensation seeking, illusion of control, and pure enjoyment. In this study, I will examine the relationship between wanting and liking (enjoyment) in gambling addiction. I hope to find out whether the people truly enjoy gambling even though they suffer losses or if it is addiction over enjoyment. The participants will perform a gambling task in which enjoyment levels are recorded. The participants will show how much they want to gamble by continuing to do so while being faced with an increasing amount of losses.

Poster Session Miller Forum

PERSONALITY TYPE IN RELATIONSHIP TO FOREIGN LANGUAGE ABILITY

Rosalie Aponte, Madeline Kaplan, Jessica Morreale

This study examines the relationship with extraverted undergraduate students and the ability to learn a second foreign language. Students enrolled in elementary and intermediate French and Spanish classes at Muhlenberg College, were given two self-report measures. The first was a self-report that measured current and past performance in the student's foreign language classes. The second survey was the Mini-IPIP Scale (Donnellan, Oswald, Baird, and Lucas, 2006) this was used to determine whether subjects were extraverts. Our hypothesis is that extraverts will report receiving higher grades and engage more in oral participation in their foreign language class. The findings show that there is a correlation with extrovert students being more likely to participate orally in class than those students who rated themselves as less extraverted.

BODY IMAGE AND SEXUAL EXPERIENCES

Matina Rentoulis, Sarah Jiunta

The study of body image is becoming increasingly important in our society, primarily at the college level, due to the implications it has on mental health, eating disorders and sexual activity. Body image includes a person's perceptions about his/her physical appearance. This study involved 28 college females, and 14 college males. Participants completed a Body-Esteem Scale, The Body Exposure during Sexual Activities Questionnaire (BESAQ) and a demographic survey, regarding frequency of sexual activity. The results indicated that females' BESAQ scores were negatively correlated with number of sexual partners as a low BESAQ score suggests less anxiety during sexual activities. There are no significant relationships between male sexual partners and scores on the BESAQ or Body-Esteem Scale. Implications of the findings were discussed.

PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH DAY

A COMPARISON OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND MOTIVATION BETWEEN ATHLETE VERSUS NON-ATHLETE STUDENTS

Kate Moyer, Dan Kulik, Jess Hand, Risa Hamilton-Lightfoot

Our abstract is "The study aimed to assess the relationship between academic motivation and achievement for non-athlete and athlete students. We also focused on the relationship between academic achievement and motivation for student athletes in-season versus out-of-season. The sample was taken from both athletes and non-athletes at Muhlenberg College, a small liberal arts school in Pennsylvania. Participants were asked to respond to a survey of twelve questions from The Student Athletes' Motivation toward Sports and Academics Questionnaire (SAMSAQ) and five questions regarding their academic achievements. We hypothesized that student-athletes in-season will have greater academic motivation than student-athletes out-of-season. Additionally, in-season student-athletes will have greater academic motivation than non-athletes, however, non-athletes will have greater academic motivation than out-of-season student athletes."

MALE INDUCTION OF STEREOTYPE THREAT IN WOMEN TAKING A MATH TEST

Rebecca Bednar, Zachary Chiero, Miles Davison, Erica Gross

Psychologists have recently studied the effects of stereotype threat in the context of standardized exams. This study was designed to look at stereotype threat in women taking a math test. Female psychology students were given a 15 question GRE practice test to complete and were given either men as administrators or women as administrators. It was hypothesized that those with men as administrators would do worse than those with women as administrators because the presence of the men would induce stereotype threat by reminding the participants of their gender.

PERCEIVED PARENTAL CONTROL: A MEDIATOR BETWEEN SIBLING STATUS AND SELF-ESTEEM

Rachel Leavitt, Suzanne Wasserman, Melissa Smith, David Weiss

Despite negative stereotypes concerning only children, research suggests that they have greater self-esteem than children with siblings, however no particular reason has been provided for this relationship. We hypothesized that perceived parental treatment will act as a mediator between sibling status and self-esteem, such that only children will perceive better parental treatment, and therefore have greater self-esteem. Participants were 82 undergraduate students who completed the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, the Perceived Parental Treatment Scale, and a demographic questionnaire. An unanticipated relationship between sibling status and perceived parental treatment was found, demonstrating that only children perceived worse parental treatment than all other individuals with siblings. No other significant relationships were found. The limitations of the study are discussed.

PERCEPTION OF GENDER STEREOTYPES USING SEXUAL ORIENTATION AS A PRIMER

Jeremy Banner, Douglas Kupferman, Pamela Rubin, Stephanie Scrofani

We wanted to determine if the perception of character traits changed according to suggested orientation of the individual. We hypothesized that participants would select opposite gender traits according to the Bem inventory when told that the people they were viewing were homosexual. Results were contrary to our hypothesis, revealing a significant pairing of words consistent with the gender of the individual in both conditions.

PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH DAY

ALCOHOL ATTITUDES AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

Amelia Adler, Samantha Crist, Lindsey Grom, Jessica Gushee

The purpose of the study is to see if college students' attitudes about alcohol consumption are influenced by stories with positive or negative outcomes. Prior research has been conducted to show that attitudes and expectations have an impact on alcohol consumption and behavior. Alcohol consumption is greater when college students feel the anticipated outcome is going to be enjoyable. We hypothesized that students who read a story about drinking with a positive experience will have a better attitude towards drinking than those students who read a story about drinking with a negative experience. However, this study found that student's attitudes were not impacted by different stories in either condition. This research needs to further be explored and can have implications for the use of college alcohol education programs.

STATE DEPENDENT SYMPATHY FOR CARTOON CHARACTERS

Marissa Beidler, Sarah Golden, Karly Rodriguez, Liz Stillman, Amy Wortzel

This study was designed to examine how feelings of exclusion affect levels of sympathy for others. The 25 participants in this study were students at Muhlenberg College, who were asked to watch a short clip of The Simpsons and fill out a short survey. Before viewing the clip, half of the participants were given candy, while the other half were told that we did not have enough candy left for them. Our results showed that people who did not receive candy felt significantly more sympathetic for the cartoon character in the clip than those who had received candy. These results indicate that perhaps sympathy levels are more state-dependent than innate.

TEST PERFORMANCE ON LOCUS OF CONTROL

Justin Rudolph, Amanda Shaffer, Lindsay Coughlin, Sarah Schrader

The purpose of this cognitive psychology study was to examine whether locus of control can be manipulated by the difficulty of a given task. The participants were randomly assigned to a difficult or easy math and grammar test. Our hypothesis is that locus of control will be affected by the difficulty of the test. We predict that those who are assigned the difficult test will have more of an external locus of control, and those in the easy condition will have an internal locus of control. We found locus of control was not manipulated by the difficulty of the test; the results were not significant.

GENDER STEREOTYPES OF PROMISCUITY

Suzi Moczydlowski, Kaitlin Merritt, Eric Levenson.

In our study, we investigated how gender and sex role stereotypes affect perceptions of promiscuity and sex in an androgynously-named character, Pat. Participants read a short story about Pat and Alex and then filled out a likeability scale and a BEM Sex Roles Inventory about Pat. There were three different stories that varied in their level of promiscuity displayed by Pat: high moderate and low promiscuity. We hypothesized that in the high promiscuity condition Pat would be viewed as being more masculine and in the low promiscuity condition Pat would be viewed as being more feminine. We also hypothesized that the characters that the participants viewed as being feminine would also be likeable if the character was less promiscuous and the characters perceived in a masculine light would be more likeable if they acted more promiscuously.

PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH DAY

LEARNING STYLES AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Joy Mitchell, Ruth Morrongiello, Sarah Albertelli, Nora Springstubb

Thirty nine undergraduate college students viewed three PowerPoint slides with words on them and were read three different groups with words. The first group had four words, the second had six and the third group had eight. After seeing or hearing each group participants wrote down as many words that they remembered in the order that they appeared. The words were randomly selected from a dictionary and were placed in the groups of no significance. Participants then filled out a learning styles inventory to decide if they were visual or auditory learners and then completed a second survey based on the time they spend doing school work, sports and other extracurricular activities. Participants remembered no more words from the visual part of the test compared to the auditory. Thus GPA was not affected by learning styles and extracurricular activities had no impact.

THE EFFECT OF MEN'S PRESUMED IDEALS ON BODY WEIGHT ON WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS OF BODY WEIGHT

Diana DiSilva, Erica Rosenbaum, Adam Hirsh

Our study is based upon the idea of sexual objectification and the effects of culture on body perceptions in women. We believe that when men are pictured on the slide show, unconscious internalized feelings from sexual objectification will lead the female participants to be more critical of the body weights of the women presented. Therefore, our research hypothesis is that the participants will rate the pictured woman as heavier when they are viewed next to a man than when they are viewed by themselves. Results are pending.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CAREER DECIDEDNESS, STRESS AND

Kristen Cioeta, Camara Murphy, Emily Nealis

Academic Achievement The relationship between career decidedness, academic achievement and stress of 30 undergraduate college students of junior and senior status was assessed. Researchers used the Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire and the Perceived Stress Scale as measurement instruments. Participants were also asked to provide their GPA as a measure of academic achievement.

FEMALE PERCEPTION OF SEXUAL INFIDELITY

Brittany Barton, Erin Herman, Dorothy Martin, and Katelyn White

Past research suggests that men and women's differing biological reproductive needs cause different responses (e.g. jealousy) toward infidelity. Men are more bothered by sexual infidelity, while women are more bothered by emotional infidelity. Social psychologists have considered positive and negative reinforcements of infidelity as the main reason for the different responses. Our study investigates women's perception of both male and female sexual infidelity. After reading a brief narrative describing the two situations, the women will be asked to complete a questionnaire evaluating both the story they read and personal information regarding infidelity. We propose that women will view male sexual infidelity as more socially unacceptable than women's sexual infidelity.

NEUROTICISM'S EFFECT ON CHEATING

Leann Rampulla, A.J. Barnold, Nicki Sompolski, Stacey Zimmer

No abstract submitted