

Undergraduate Honors Projects – 2000-2001

Angela Adams

Predicting Adolescent and Runaway Behavior

Advisor: Dr. Tom Dishion

This study examined adolescent runaway behavior from an inpatient setting. The data was collected from the case files of 91 ex-residents of a local adolescent residential treatment center. Five variables were tested as possible predictors of runaway behavior: having a history of running away, having a history of sexual abuse, having a history of physical abuse, number of previous out-of-home placements, and proximity of home. It was hypothesized that residents with either a history of running away, a history of sexual abuse, a history of physical abuse, multiple previous out-of-home placements, or a home that is in the same area as the treatment center would be more likely to run away than those residents who do not have these histories/characteristic. Residents who ran away from the treatment center were more likely to have a history of running away, a history of sexual abuse, and multiple previous out-of-home placements. The results suggested that a resident's likelihood of running away could be predicted based on certain personal characteristic recorded at intake.

B. Renee Ahnert

The Social Outcomes of Empathic Accuracy

Advisor: Dr. Sara Hodges

The primary purpose of this research is to investigate the social outcomes of empathic accuracy. The main hypothesis is that positive regard towards a perceiver increases as that perceiver's empathic accuracy (with respect to the target in question) increases. In other words, we like people better if they are accurate in understanding our moment-to-moment thoughts and feelings. These questions were addressed using a widely used empathic accuracy paradigm, whereby actual thoughts and feelings reported by the target are compared to perceiver's inferences of those thoughts and feelings. In addition, perceivers wrote a free-form letter to targets. Targets, after reading the inferences and the letter, rated each perceiver on a number of dimensions related to positive regard. The target subjects (N=20) were first-time mothers whose babies were between two and four months of age. Initial results indicate that the perceiver's empathic accuracy does predict a global measure of positive regard reported by targets towards those perceivers. It remains to be seen, however, whether empathic accuracy will still be a significant predictor once some of the other variables are taken into account. Future research on this project will address this question.

Melanie Ayres

Gender Schemas in Children's Judgments of Others

Advisors: Heidi Ellis and Dr. Jeffrey Measelle

At around age 4, children have been found to make gender typical associations and are already developing a gender schema. This study seeks to understand whether or not preschool children will use their gender knowledge to make

differential judgments of other children. The participants, male and female subjects ages 38-65 months, were read a story in which the story character was either referred to as male or female. At the conclusion of the story, the participants were asked several questions about how they expected the character to behave in various situations. They were also given a series of dichotomous adjectives and asked to choose which one best described the story character. Partial support was found for the hypothesis in that kids rated the characters somewhat differently based on the character sex, but it is suggested that the child's sex may also play a role in how children think about others.

Danielle Chantiny

The Effect of Stroke on Handedness

Advisor: Dr. Paul Dassonville

The cerebral hemispheres are asymmetrical and specialized, suggesting that one hemisphere might be better equipped to control fine motor movements in the hand. However, this does not explain why approximately 90% of the population is right-handed while the other 10% is left-handed or ambidextrous, nor does it explain why some people have very strong preferences for one hand over the other while others only weakly prefer one hand. While hand preference remains fairly stable over a lifetime, hand performance may change due to unfortunate circumstances such as a stroke. Using a modified Edinburgh Inventory participants in this study declared hand preference before and after the stroke. General findings show that after moderate or severe stroke, participants express preference for the unaffected hand regardless of hand preference prior to the stroke. Contrary to the hypothesis, no patterns were found after mild strokes; some participants showed no alteration in hand preference from pre to post-stroke, while others' preference changed only slightly, and still others demonstrated strong preference for the unaffected hand.

Ryann Crowley

Gender and Trusting

Advisor: Dr. Holly Arrow

This study investigates the trusting behaviors of men and women. The participants of this study are 261 women and 104 men enrolled as undergraduates at the University of Oregon. Trust was measured using a social card paradigm. The results of this experiment indicate that women are marginally more trusting than men ($p < .037$, $df = 276$) and that women trust women more than they trust men ($p < .007$, $df = 89$). Understanding that there are differences between males and females helps improve environments where males and females must interact. Knowing the trusting behaviors of males and females will help further the investigation of gender differences.

Brooke Hallinan

Experience, Empathic Accuracy and Alcoholism

Advisor: Dr. Sara Hodges

Have you ever thought to yourself, "What on earth is that person thinking?" Wouldn't it be nice if people could learn ways to better infer with the thoughts and feelings of others? This experiment examines empathic accuracy, or

the ability to accurately infer the thoughts and feelings of others. In particular, I examine how both Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) members and non-alcoholic college students infer the thoughts and feelings of other AA members. I am particularly interested in examining how similarity of experience or imagining oneself in a similar experience affects empathic accuracy for someone describing his or her experiences as an alcoholic. The subjects included 10 AA members as targets, 10 AA members as perceivers and 40 non-alcoholic college students. The results suggest that neither shared experience nor imagining oneself in a similar experience helps increase one's ability to accurately infer an alcoholic's thoughts and feelings.

Kumi Kitano

Japanese-American Differences in Social Desirability Valuing

Advisor: Dr. Gerard Saucier

The present study was designed to study judged social desirability values between Japanese and Americans. Fifteen Japanese students (male=7 and female=8) and around twelve American students (male=6, female=6) will be asked to complete both English and Japanese versions of questionnaires. A t-test and ANOVA will apply to the data of social desirability scores to analyze the relationship between personality-descriptive adjectives and cultural values. In addition, comparing a Japanese questionnaire with an English questionnaire within the same cultural group, different language values will be examined. The main research hypothesis is that there will be significant differences of social desirability values between Japanese culture and the United States culture. Specifically, since Japanese culture is strongly associated with the concept of omoiyari, translated generally into empathy, my specific hypothesis is that Japanese will tend to rate as more desirable empathy-related personality terms than will Americans

Tiffany L. Lewis

Beyond the Fight Song and "Louie Louie": A Study of Intergroup Perception among Members of the Oregon Marching Band

Advisor: Dr. Mick Rothbart

Approximately 100 University of Oregon marching band members participated in this study which addresses two general issues regarding stereotyping and intergroup perception within a marching band. The first issue of interest is ingroup favoritism: Do the "families" of woodwind, brass, and percussion each view themselves as superior to the other? Ingroup favoritism was assessed through subjects' ratings of each family's musical contribution and importance to the band. The second issue of interest compares actual and perceived temperament differences between families of the band. Subjects filled out a modified adult temperament measure first for themselves and then as they thought typical members of each family would. There was no evidence of ingroup favoritism between woodwind and brass families but strong support for stereotyping. Implications for social psychology and music education are discussed.

Quinton Moretz

Voluntary Suppression of Information from Working Memory

Advisor: Dr. Mike Anderson

This experiment tests the idea that through the use of inhibitory control processes, a person can voluntarily suppress unwanted information from working memory when cues to this information are presented. Results show that as the repetitions of suppress trials increase, there is a decrease in final recall when cued with the same information.

Hadley Morotti

Empathy, Gender and Physiological Feedback

Advisor: Dr. Sara Hodges

The study examined the effect of false physiological feedback on empathic accuracy and empathic concern. College-aged participants (n=49) watched a video of a graduate student explaining why she needed participants for a study. Participants were assigned to either a control or false feedback condition, although all of them were attached to false physiological feedback equipment. False feedback participants heard a series of sounds that were supposedly related to their skin conductance and indicated a high level of arousal, whereas control participants heard nothing. After the video, participants completed measures of empathic accuracy and empathic concern and indicated their willingness to help the graduate student by donating hours for free for experiments. Contrary to predictions, no significant differences were found between the two experimental groups, nor were there any sex differences, for any of the measures, suggesting that the false physiological feedback did not affect participants' perceptions of the target.

Ingrid Perdew

Dissociation, Abuse Histories and Types of Abusers

Advisor: Dr. Jennifer Freyd

A survey was completed by 26 women, who were experiencing different types and levels of abuse from their intimate partners. Information was gathered for each type of reported abuse, including severity, frequency, psychological impact on the victim, and the perpetrator's use of denial and blame. Analyses determined if the women's dissociation levels were related to their abuse histories. In addition, this study examined the characteristics of each abuser, and then compared these characteristics to different typologies of male batterers. Some methodological limitations of this study are reviewed, and suggestions for future research are offered.

Catherine J. Peterson

Individual Differences and Group-Inclusion Strategies

Advisor: Dr. Holly Arrow

The strategies utilized by an individual to become included into a group are affected by individual differences. Sixty-seven male and female, undergraduates at the University of Oregon, ranging predominantly in age from 18 to 25, were placed in a game situation that involved repeatedly forming small groups. These interactions were video recorded and coded for strategies utilized and the resulting success, or lack of (inclusion versus exclusion). These individuals and their interactions were also assessed using Robert F. Bales SYMLOG (1990); and the subjects assessed their own personalities using Gerard Saucier's Mini-Markers (1994) for comparison, and in hope of possible correlation with strategy use. Results are still forthcoming.

Stephanie L. Skow

The Search for Meaning in PMS

Advisor:

The present research focuses on examining possible benefits or secondary gains that PMS might promote. Secondary gains could include absence from school or work, permission to express anger, heightened sensitivity, or even eating certain foods, such as chocolate. Thirty-three female college freshmen and sophomore students completed questionnaires that assessed negative PMS symptoms, PMS benefits, and PMS treatments. First it is predicted that women will report experiencing PMS not only during the premenstrual period, but also during menstruation. The second hypothesis states that women will experience positive benefits as well as negative symptoms of PMS. Finally, it is predicted that there is a positive correlation between positive and negative symptoms of PMS. The results support all predictions. Women do report experiencing PMS during both the premenstrual and menstrual periods. Participants also report experiencing positive benefits as well as negative symptoms of PMS. Positive correlations do exist between clusters of negative symptoms and PMS benefits. The meaning behind the Western phenomenon of PMS is discussed, as well as women's definition of PMS.

Kumiko Yokokura

Culture Shock Among International Students

Advisors: Jason Quiring and Dr. Gerard Saucier

Culture shock among international students was examined at the University of Oregon. Three factors were used in determining culture shock: communication, academic, and preparedness. As the concepts of individualism and collectivism suggested, it was hypothesized that region of origin could contribute to the degree of culture shock experienced by Asian and European students. Twenty-six Asian international students and 25 European international students participated to fill out the survey. The results were statistically significant, which supported the hypothesis that culture shock was greater among Asian students than European students. Furthermore, the Asian students experienced more difficulties in communicating with Americans, had more concerns about academics, and showed greater efforts to prepare to come to the United States as compared to the European students.