

***Psychology Department***

***Student Awards Ceremony and Research Symposium***

**28th Annual Student Scholars Day at Grand Valley State University**

Wednesday, April 10th, 2024

3:00-5:30pm

Kirkhoff Center 2263

**Welcome and Introduction - 3:00pm**

***Psychology Undergraduate Award Ceremony: 3:05-3:20pm***

Please join us in celebrating our Psychology Department award recipients!

Robert Hendersen Leadership Award – **Zoe Schultz**

Research Excellence (Psychology) – **Brooke Campbell**

Research Excellence (Behavioral Neuroscience) – **Emily Bolthouse**

Academic Excellence (Psychology) – **Emma Fairchild**

Academic Excellence (Behavioral Neuroscience) – **Hanna Dobson**

Provost’s Excellence in a Discipline Awards for…

Behavioral Neuroscience – **Megan Singer**

Psychology – **Zoe Schultz**

School Psychology – **Anna Mayotte**

***Psychology Research Symposium: 3:20-5:30pm***

*MasterChef Contestant to Social Media Influencer: Do Men and Women Differ in Pursuing Prestige?*

**3:20-3:35pm**

**Presenter: Jada Thomas**

Mentor: Robert Deaner

The male show-off hypothesis claims that men are more likely than women to show off their abilities and publicly compete. However, the male show-off hypothesis has yet to be tested in a domain where both men and women are consistently involved, such as cooking. To examine showing off and cooking, we assessed the social media behavior of MasterChef reality program contestants both in the U.S. and Australia. We focused on 98 contestants from MasterChef U.S. (m = 52 & f = 46) and 107 contestants from MasterChef Australia (m = 45 & f = 62). For each contestant, we examined the social media content they produced on several popular platforms upon the conclusion of their season. Although we coded several measures, our primary measure was Instagram followers. Contrary to the male show-off hypothesis, in both the U.S. and Australia, the number of followers did not differ significantly between male and female contestants. This result suggests that the male show-off hypothesis may not be valid in all domains.

*The Impact of Social Exclusion on Conspiracy Belief Formation and Reality Construction*

**3:35-3:50pm**

**Presenter: Destinee Partain**

Mentor: Kristy K. Dean

Social exclusion fosters conspiratorial beliefs although the mechanisms at play are still unknown. Prior research suggests that excluded people join conspiratorial groups as a way to regain both acceptance and a level of control over their reality (van der Wal et al., 2018). The current study aims to replicate these results, while also examining the role of other basic needs (e.g., self-esteem, meaning in life, physical safety) in fueling conspiratorial beliefs. Additionally, the study aims to investigate how beliefs on reality (spiritual vs. scientific) act as a type of mediator potentially fueling conspiratorial thinking.  To study this phenomenon, 250 participants will randomly experience either exclusion or inclusion in a workplace scenario. We will then measure the threat to basic needs, belief in conspiracies, thinking styles (analytic vs. intuitive), and views on reality (scientific vs. spiritual). We expect that those who feel excluded will report higher threats to basic needs, stronger conspiratorial beliefs, and a preference for spiritual over scientific views on reality, compared to those who feel accepted. If our hypotheses are supported, the underlying mechanisms of how conspiracy ideas are formed and maintained will be further understood; allowing for more effective preventative measures and deradicalization techniques.

*Testing the “Natural-is-Better” Bias for Sunscreen*

**3:50-4:05pm**

**Presenter: Brooke Campbell**

Mentor: Amanda Dillard

This study tested the “natural-is-better bias” for sunscreen in college students. The goal of this experiment was to determine if people had different emotions and beliefs about a sunscreen when it was labeled natural vs synthetic. The participants in this study were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. In one condition, they were told that the sunscreen they would be using was synthetic or made from ingredients not found in nature. In the other condition, participants were told that the sunscreen they were using was natural or made from ingredients found in nature. All participants were asked to use it under a fake sunlamp for a period of 7 minutes. Before and after using the sunscreen, participants’ emotions were measured. Following using the sunscreen, participants were asked to rate their attitude toward the sunscreen as well as rate its safety and effectiveness. Results indicated that compared to those who believed they used a synthetic sunscreen, those who believed they used a natural sunscreen had a more positive attitude toward the sunscreen. Compared to those in the synthetic condition, those in the natural condition applied more of the sunscreen prior to using it under the sunlamp.

*Authentic Dissent is Superior to a Devil’s Advocate in Inspiring Divergent Thinking*

**4:05-4:20pm**

**Presenters: GraceAna Hoorn, Samantha Walquist, Lauren Behrenwald, & Emily Murray**

Mentor: Christine M. Smith

Although the presence of minority dissent within groups is associated with multiple benefits (e.g., divergent thinking, more robust examination issues), sources of dissent are perceived less positively than other group members, perhaps because they are construed as members of the outgroup. This has prompted the suggestion that dissent be introduced by way of a devil’s advocate, thereby allowing the benefits of dissent to be reaped without any cost. We examined the cognitive processes of those exposed to majority influence, authentic minority influence and an assigned devil’s advocate arguing a minority point of view. Our results suggest that authentic sources of dissent are more effective than devil’s advocates in inspiring divergent thinking. However, despite their arguments being identical, authentic sources of minority influence compared less favorably to the majority than did those who were assigned the role of devil’s advocate within their group along a variety of dimensions.

*Break 4:20-4:30pm*

*What Do Campus Police Officers Think About Their Role in Supporting Student Mental Health?*

**4:30-4:45pm**

**Presenters: Zoe Schultz, Abigail Graffenius, & Amber Luckett**

Mentor: Kristy K. Dean

Recognizing the role law enforcement officials have played in dealing with mental health issues across the nation, this study examined how campus police officers view their roles and responsibilities when responding to calls of service that include mental health concerns.  Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 law enforcement officials from a midwestern university campus.  Interviews asked about mental health training, the steps they take during a mental health call, how they distinguish criminal concerns and mental health issues, and who they believe should be responsible for responding to these calls.  Interviews were transcribed and then coded and analyzed using MAXQDA.  Preliminary results show that when interacting with students, officers utilize a direct line of questioning to help discern mental health concerns vs crises.  Additionally, when asked who should be responsible for mental health-related calls, many officers recognized that within our society citizens call the police for most things.  Therefore, police first responders bear some responsibility for addressing students’ mental health crises, and report confidence in the skills their training provided.  This research furthers our understanding of policing and mental health concerns in both a university context and in general.

*Investigating Predictors of Neglect and Termination of Parental Rights in Local Families*

**4:45-5:00pm**

**Presenters: Zoe Schultz, Erin Korte, & Brooke Campbell**

Mentors: Mary Bower-Russa & Gwenden Dueker

The Competency to Parent Project aims to understand how various parent, child, and family factors impact a parent's ability to effectively care for their child(ren).  Archival Child Protective Services (CPS) family court case filings from a southwest Michigan county were analyzed and information relating to why CPS was investigating the family situation and the eventual court outcomes of the case were coded. Preliminary analyses aimed to discover what factors were related to the presence of physical neglect in the home, what factors predicted the court’s decisions to terminate parental rights and whether including a "family churn" score (an attempt to describe the level of chaos in the family system) would improve prediction of court outcomes. Parent substance abuse and mental illness both positively predicted the presence of neglect in the home. Parent substance abuse, current incarceration, a child having been temporarily removed from parent custody and family economic instability were factors associated with an increased risk of losing parental rights, while the presence of emotional abuse in the home was associated with a decreased likelihood of termination.  The family churn score did not predict court outcomes. This study explored the process surrounding local decisions about the termination of parental rights.

*Religious Framing, Moral Foundations, and Identity: A Replication and Extension*

**5:00-5:15pm**

**Presenter: Brianna Mucciante**

**Mentor:** Luke Galen

Religiosity is positively associated with moral self-image enhancement. However, two previous pre-registered studies identified a framing effect such that initial completion of general religious measures resulted in lower moral self-image and binding morality compared to when the moral measures were administered first. This study attempts to replicate this effect with measures featuring differing religious content. Participants were assigned to receive either conservative religion first (followed by moral measures), liberal religion first, or the moral measures first. ANOVAs did not reveal an effect of type of religious measure on subsequent moral responding. However, exploratory analyses indicated a framing effect such that those first completing moral measures reported lower certainty of God’s existence and greater atheist identification compared to those completing religious items first. Although not specifically hypothesized, this is similar to the previous pre-registered effect in that, despite a positive association between the two constructs, those completing moral measures subsequently report lower levels of religiosity. This may represent a “contrast effect” such that one set of material induces the motivation to respond in the opposite direction on the other. Although modest in size, this effect suggests that even reporting of self-identity (i.e., as religious or atheist) can be malleable.

*Exploring the Causal Relationship Between Lack of Control in One’s Life and Conspiratorial Beliefs*

**5:15-5:30pm**

**Presenters: Elias Ghazal, Lauryn Babb, Elizabeth Wehner, Mya Hanna, & Joshua Kopich**

**Mentors:** Mario Fific & Brian Bowdle

Exploring the individual tendency towards embracing conspiratorial beliefs presents a considerable challenge for researchers, frequently uncovering weak and inconsistent correlations with factors such as personality traits, perception of cognitive processes, decision-making capabilities, and sensory sensitivity. A major limitation of these research is its reliance on correlational, self-report measures. To address this gap, our study introduces an experimental approach, the "Broken Fridge" task, designed to place participants in a scenario where they must attempt to control the temperature of a refrigerator. This setting uniquely positions participants to experience a loss of control, thereby allowing for a direct assessment of the locus of control. Our methodology aims to provide more detailed insights into the effect of individual's locus of control and their propensity towards conspiratorial beliefs. This experimental procedure not only circumvents the limitations of traditional self-report measures but also offers a novel perspective on the intricate dynamics underlying the formation of conspiratorial thinking. Through this approach, our study aims to illuminate the detailed interplay between psychological control and the endorsement of conspiracy theories, offering a more robust understanding of the factors that contribute to conspiratorial beliefs.

***Poster Presentations and Department Social 5:30-6:00pm***

All attendees are invited to browse the Psychology research posters and connect with classmates and professors. Snacks are provided.

For the complete SSD schedule of events, including the keynote address, live in-person, Zoom, and poster presentations: <https://www.gvsu.edu/ours/ssd/> Thank you for your participation in SSD!