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RESEARCH
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**SYMPOSIUM
PROGRAMME BOOK**

On an Unchanging Mission: Reaching out to the Turbulent World

Keynote Speaker



Prof. Low Wah Yun

Prof. Dr. Low Wah Yun is a Professor of Psychology at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Currently, Prof Low is the Deputy Executive Director (Research and Internationalization) at the Asia-Europe Institute, University of Malaya. She is actively engaged in teaching, research, service and consultancy. Her research interest revolves around behavioural medicine, health promotion, sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, men's health and ageing. At present, she is involved in 4 international research projects on COVID-19. Prof Low is involved in a 6-ASEAN country research project on Strengthening of Surveillance System for NCDs Prevention and Control and Health Promotion. She is the Managing Editor of the Asia-Pacific Journal of Public Health and also the President of the Asia Pacific Academy Consortium for Public Health (APACPH).



Plenary Speakers



Dr. Yvonne Leung

Yvonne Leung, PhD is an assistant professor in psychology at the University of Nottingham Malaysia and an adjunct lecturer at the School of Psychiatry, University of New South Wales (UNSW, Australia). Dr Leung conducts research in dementia and the psychological health of older adults. She has a PhD in psychology and worked previously at the Centre for Healthy Brain Ageing, UNSW. She has been the coordinator of the International Centenarian Consortium for Dementia, where she harmonised data from 18 studies on ageing across 11 countries to identify global risk factors for dementia in people aged 95 and above. She is also a co-investigator of the Sydney Centenarian Study and the Cohort Studies of Memory in an International Consortium (COSMIC), where she examines the psychological health of centenarians and risk factors associated with cognitive decline in older adults internationally. Her research interests include cognitive impairment, mental health in old age and caregivers, quality of life, and successful ageing.



Ms. Tan Cher Yi

Tan Cher Yi is a Master of Science in Psychology student at Sunway University, Malaysia. She also works as a part-time teaching assistant at Sunway University. Her recent research focuses on physical activity and executive function. She has been actively collaborating with members from Sunway University, Monash University, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman and University of Aberdeen in publishing research findings related to aging, culture, cognitive functioning, creativity and subjective well-being. She had submitted findings related to the psychological impact of the COVID-19 pandemic to the Minister of Health (MOH) Malaysia in 2020. In addition, she was one of the presenters in Malaysian International Psychology Conference 2017.

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KEYNOTE SPEAKER:**Psycho-social Effects of Covid-19 Pandemic****Author:** Low Wah Yun, PhD**Affiliation(s):** Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

COVID-19 pandemic and its preventive measures have had devastating effects on people's everyday lives. Malaysia reported its first three cases of COVID-19 on 25 January 2020 and in 18th March 2020, a national Movement Control Order (MCO) was implemented to prevent its spread. This mandatory MCO resulted in confinement, separation of families and friends, fear of infection, stigma, restriction of personal freedom, losses (job, income, health, etc), uncertainty of the future and all these contribute to psychological distress, parenting practices, spouses' relationships and interpersonal violence. This lecture will present findings from an international online survey examining the psychological status, parenting practices, relationship, boredom, interpersonal violence, and well-being of 543 participants by comparing their scores before and during the COVID-19 MCO. The results showed that over half the respondents (58.3%) experienced some form of anxiety: mild (25.2%), moderate (13.6%) and severe (19.5%) anxiety. Relationship quality was negatively associated with having children and spousal violence. During MCO, participants' well-being worsened, more anxious, more bored and lonely. However, relationship, violence, and parenting practices did not show any significant difference before and during MCO. The pandemic has impacted the psycho-social well-being and thus new strategies and interventions are needed to improve resilience and cope with mental health issues during the pandemic.

PLENARY TALK:

Effect of Physical Activity on Attention, Cognitive Flexibility and Working Memory

Author(s): Tan Cher Yi¹, Yong Min Hooi¹, & Schaefer, A.²

Affiliation(s): ¹ Sunway University, Malaysia

² Monash University, Malaysia

Purpose: To examine the effect of physical activity (PA) on executive function (EF) over time during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methodology: We recruited 105 respondents ($M_{age} = 25.79, SD = 3.99$). They completed a set of questionnaires before EF tasks either by phone or online platforms as baseline (Time 1). They recorded their daily PA for 14 days in a diary. After 14 days, they completed similar questionnaires and EF tasks (Time 2), and again one month after the 14 days (Time 3).

Results: Our results showed that high and moderate PA group had higher attention and working memory (WM) accuracy and better performance in task-based cognitive flexibility (CF) task compared to low PA group. Both groups showed improvement in attention and WM in Time 2 compared to baseline and maintained their performance in Time 3. The low PA group showed significant decline in attention in Time 3 compared to baseline, and this EF decline could not be explained by stress, mood and perceived social isolation.

Limitations: Most of our participants are Chinese (86.7%), hence generalizations to the Malaysian demographic should be made with caution. Other factors e.g. sleep and social activities were not studied in this study and it may have an effect on EF.

Implications: Our findings highlighted the importance of staying physically active during the COVID-19 pandemic to maintain high levels of EF.

Research Impact: Current study added new knowledge related to sustainability effect of PA on EF and included a more objective form of measuring exercise virtually.

Psychological health of older adults: Recent findings in Australia and Malaysia

Author: Yvonne Leung^{1,2}

Affiliation(s): ¹ University of Nottingham Malaysia

² Centre for Healthy Brain Ageing, UNSW

Abstract: Rapid population ageing is a significant challenge faced by both developed and developing countries. Currently, there were 703 million individuals aged 65 or over worldwide and this number is predicted to double by 2050 (United Nations, 2019). To achieve successful ageing, maintaining both physical and psychological health are essential, and there are no better representatives than those who had outlived most people in their birth cohorts, the super-agers /oldest-old (aged 95+). In this talk, I will give an overview of research on the psychological health of the oldest-old. I will also share our recent findings on the psychological health of older adults in Australia and Malaysia, where we compared levels of psychological distress and life satisfaction between the oldest-old and ‘young olds’ (aged between 70-90) in Australia, and identified factors associated with distress, depressive symptoms and life satisfaction among older adults in Australia and Malaysia.

Our recent findings suggest that the oldest-old showed significantly higher level of psychological distress than the young olds. Social support plays a significant role in preventing distress and improving life satisfaction in both older Australians and Malaysians after controlling for sociodemographic and physical health factors. More specifically, having the feeling of being loved and cared for from contacts with their friends and relatives has a significant impact on their life satisfaction.

While more representative, population-based data is required to better understand the wellbeing of older adults, the identification of risk factors for lower life satisfaction, psychological distress and depression in the elderly could offer opportunities for intervention and public awareness.

PRESENTATION:

Age Difference and Psychological Factors That Predict Adoption Rate of Protective Measures for COVID-19 in Malaysia

Author(s): Brenda Chow Gynn, Grace Yap Chin Choo

Affiliation: Sunway University, Malaysia

Type of submission: Oral Presentation

Subthemes: Covid-19-related topics

Purpose: COVID-19 has affected more than 140,000 individuals in Malaysia. Adoption of protective measures is crucial to contain the disease. This study answers two research questions; what psychological factors predict the adoption of protective measures, and, is there an age difference in adoption of protective measures for COVID-19 in Malaysia.

Methodology: 310 individuals, between the age of 18-65 years old, who were in Malaysia during the 2020 Movement Control Order, were recruited to answer an online survey assessing their perceived severity, perceived vulnerability against COVID-19, perceived self-efficacy of adopting protective measures and perceived anxiety. One-way ANOVA and standard multiple regression were conducted to analyse the data.

Results: Perceived self-efficacy and perceived anxiety were significant predictors of adoption of protective measures, while perceived severity and perceived vulnerability were not. Older adult group (≥ 37 years) was found to adopt significantly more protective measures as compared to younger adult groups.

Limitations: The results were collected from the end of July to September, possibly affecting participants' perceived severity, vulnerability and anxiety towards COVID-19, as the number of COVID-19 cases were decreasing.

Implications: This study provides insight on psychological factors that affect adoption of protective measures in Malaysia during COVID-19, which could be influenced through intervention to increase adoption of protective measures. The results also increase understanding on age differences on adoption of preventive measures in response to COVID-19.

Research Impact: The relevant authorities can utilise results from this study to create more relevant interventions and target them more towards the younger population, to promote adoption of protective behaviours against COVID-19 in Malaysia.

Demographic Differences in Cabin Fever

Author: Chin Wen Cong

Affiliation: Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, Malaysia

Type of submission: Virtual Poster

Subthemes: Covid-19-related topics

Purpose: The study aimed to examine how differences in demographic variables (i.e., age, employment status, and gender) can influence cabin fever among Malaysian adults.

Methodology: A total of 124 adults (75% females) aged 19-57 years old ($M = 29.3$ years) in Malaysia completed the online survey while staying at home during the Movement Control Order. Differences in the level of cabin fever by age, employment status, and gender were compared by running independent sample t-test analyses.

Results: Youths (19-24 years) suffered with more behavioural symptoms of cabin fever compared to adults with the age range of 25-57 years old. Besides that, unemployed adults exhibited a significantly higher level of cabin fever compared to employed adults. However, no significant difference was found in cabin fever for males and females.

Limitations: The study only discovered the demographic variables of cabin fever but did not investigate the protective or risk factors that are related to the symptoms of cabin fever. Also, the study only included adults without any children and elderly samples.

Implications: Demographic variables such as age and employment status can influence cabin fever among Malaysian adults. Thus, the psychological well-being of the high-risk groups (i.e., young and unemployed adults) should be considered when they are required to stay at home for a lengthy period.

Research Impact: Policymakers may benefit from this study. When imposing the Movement Control Order, it is important to address the psychological well-being of young and unemployed adults.

Perceived Stress, Avoidant Coping, Hopelessness, and Psychological Distress among Undergraduate Students during COVID-19 Pandemic

Author(s): Rafah Mohamed, Ruhaya Hussin

Affiliation: International Islamic University, Malaysia

Type of submission: Oral Presentation

Subthemes: Covid-19-related topics

Purpose: This study aims to examine the relationships between perceived stress, avoidant coping, hopelessness, and psychological distress among undergraduate students in Malaysia during COVID-19 pandemic.

Methodology: A cross-sectional survey was employed, and 113 participants were recruited via purposive sampling. Undergraduate students who were active during the pandemic from International Islamic University Malaysia (48.7%), Sunway University (10.6%), Taylor's university (8.8%), and other Malaysian universities were approached while those diagnosed with any psychological disorder by trained professionals as stated in the DSM-5 were excluded from the study. The variables were measured using Perceived stress scale, Brief approach/avoidance coping questionnaire, Beck's hopelessness scale, and General health questionnaire.

Results: Results indicated that perceived stress, avoidant coping, and hopelessness were positively correlated with psychological distress.

Limitations: As this was a cross-sectional survey, causality with the pandemic cannot be established. As different universities responded differently to the pandemic it could have influenced the strength of the relationship between variables, for example, IIUM began ERTL after a three-month break, whereas Taylor's University a two-week break.

Implications: Future research can examine whether perceived stress, avoidant coping, and hopelessness, may predict psychological distress longitudinally in this population. Support system developers can pilot test possible psychosocial interventions addressing stress, avoidant coping, and hopelessness to decrease the psychological distress for this population.

Research Impact: This study adds to the knowledge on university students' psychological health during the pandemic and aid in improving and developing universities' support systems for the students and for future reference in counselling services centres handling undergraduate students.

Personality as a Mediator in The Relationship of Self-Perception and Mental Health of Young Adults During The COVID-19 Pandemic.

Author(s): Samia J. Khalifa, Amira N. Yahaya, Mimi Fitriana Zaini

Affiliation(s): International University of Malaya-Wales, University of Malaya, Malaysia

Type of submission: Virtual Poster

Subthemes: Covid-19-related topics

Purpose: The aim of this study was to examine how personality can act as a mediating impact on one's self-perception and then how it would rate their mental health under or the stressors and uncertainties of life. This study also explored how negative mental health can manifest itself during pandemics among young adults.

Methodology: The Big Five Inventory (BFI), Self-Perception Profile for College students, and the Mental Well Being Scale (WEMWBS) were used as questionnaires and were distributed online to 209 students in Malaysia.

Results: Results have shown that there is a significant relationship between all the study variables including all 5 personality types.

Limitations: The demographic location and sample size can't be generalized to all countries.

Implications: The results have proven how personality, self-perception and mental health are significantly related to each other. This can serve as a great body of knowledge especially for mental health professions as a guide to deal with clients during this pandemic.

Research Impact: Since the results have shown significant results between personality, mental health and self-perception; this can potentially act like a guide for higher authorities makers and professional health practitioners to develop a better understanding toward how personalities can play a major role in our life, thus handling the situation more effectively.

Perspectives of undergraduate students towards Emergency Remote Training during Covid-19

Author(s): Abeer Hanfah, Eeman Imran Butt, Ming Ai Loh, Teh Jia Yu, Vartika Khandelwal, Wong Bao Yi

Affiliation: University of Nottingham Malaysia

Type of submission: Oral Presentation

Subthemes: Covid-19-related topics

Purpose: The study aimed to explore the perspectives of undergraduate students on emergency remote teaching (ERT) as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Methodology: Emergency remote training is the sudden change of the mode of delivery of teaching. 7 participants from different courses at the University of Nottingham Malaysia enrolled in ERT for 6 months prior to the study took part in a semi-structured focus group interview conducted online. Questions covered various aspects like technical support, grasping of concepts and scope of improvement. A thematic analysis was conducted to draw out themes.

Results: The researchers identified three main themes: flexibility, social and technical barriers and improvements. Students elaborated on how ERT allowed flexibility; helping them take the course in a self-paced manner. Another positive mentioned under the social and technical barriers theme was the extra effort exerted by the technical team and lecturers to help with ERT. The negatives included sense of isolation as the interactions with lecturers and peers were entirely online, difficulty in completing group work and poor internet connectivity at homes. Students preferred such a course to cost less than traditional teaching courses and would like more physical interaction with their peers.

Limitations: The use of online interviews does not allow the researchers to pick up non-verbal cues, this may have led to compliance in a group setting. There was also a lack of anonymity as participants had their cameras on.

Implications: The current study adds to the minimal literature on ERT and can be used to improve online learning environments and teaching strategies.

Research Impact: The findings can be used to structure courses differently and improve social interaction among students in ERT.

The Mediating Role of Religiosity on The Relationship between Internet Pornography Use and Depressive Symptoms among Young Adults during Covid-19

Author(s): Enas S. Ahmed¹, Amira N. Yahya², Mimi Fitriana Zaini³

Affiliation(s): ¹UCSI University, Malaysia

²University of Malaya, Malaysia

³International University of Malaya-Wales, Malaysia

Type of submission: Oral Presentation

Subthemes: Covid-19-related topics

Purpose: This study investigates the mediating role of religiosity on the relationship between internet pornography use and depressive symptoms, targeting young adults amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methodology: We distributed the Problematic Pornography Consumption Scale (PPCS-18), Zung Self-Rating Depression Scale (SDS) and the Arabic Scale of Intrinsic Religiosity (ASIR) through convenience sampling among 300 students in public and private universities in Malaysia. We then analysed the data through Exploratory, Descriptive, Pearson's correlation, T-test, and Process analysis.

Results: Results of the study found that there is a positive correlation between internet pornography use and depressive symptoms and a positive relationship between religiosity and depressive symptoms. However, the study could not find a significant relationship between internet pornography use and religiosity. Additionally, males were found to have significantly higher levels of internet pornography use than females. Lastly, religiosity had no mediating role on the relationship between internet pornography use and depressive symptoms.

Limitations: The inability to accurately generalize the findings of the study to a wider population as majority of the respondents were Muslim, and participants were recruited in two states in Malaysia only. Using convenience sampling also limited the generalizability.

Implications: The findings of this study provide additional knowledge for future researchers investigating the addictive behaviour in young adults amidst global pandemics and mental health issues.

Research Impact: This study adds in for future investigation on internet pornography use amidst pandemic timeframes to compare the usage with pandemic free timelines.

Online Learning and Student Behaviour amid the COVID-19 Pandemic

Author(s): Ashley R. Lim, Elaine Yong

Affiliation: Sunway University, Malaysia

Type of submission: Oral Presentation

Subthemes: Educational Psychology

Purpose: This study investigated the relationships between the duration spent learning online, digital literacy, academic self-efficacy, and academic procrastination. This study also examined how academic self-efficacy, academic procrastination, and digital literacy varied by gender.

Methodology: 230 students (female = 167) completed the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire, Academic Time Management and Procrastination Measure, and the Perceived ICT Literacy Scale for this study. Participants were full-time students from private and public universities, aged 18 to 25, currently residing in Malaysia, and healthy. A bivariate correlational study was designed to investigate these variables.

Results: No significant differences were found between the duration spent learning online on academic self-efficacy and academic procrastination. Digital literacy had a significant positive effect on academic self-efficacy. Additionally, there were no gender differences in academic self-efficacy, academic procrastination, and digital literacy.

Limitations: Sampling bias could have affected the results, as the snowball sampling method was used for data collection. This study also failed to consider the students' prior online learning experiences. Consequently, it is possible that students' academic self-efficacy was impacted not only through the duration spent learning online; thus, affecting the validity of the results.

Implications: The results suggest that educators and higher academic institutions should provide systematic support to develop students' digital literacy skills and increase learners' academic self-efficacy to cope in an online learning environment.

Research Impact: This study provides valuable information on how digital literacy affects academic self-efficacy amid the COVID-19 pandemic, prompting education institutions to incorporate critical thinking and ICT modules in their course programmes.

Teachers' Knowledge, Attitude and Perception of Important Factors towards Inclusive Education in Malaysia

Author(s): Chow Shze Loon, Wo Su Woan

Affiliation(s): Sunway University, Malaysia

Type of submission: Virtual Poster

Subthemes: Educational Psychology

Purpose:

1. To find out the knowledge, attitude and perception of inclusive education among teachers in Malaysia.
2. To find out the differences that may arise in teachers' attitude towards inclusive education based on differences in teaching level.
3. To explore the challenges faced by teachers who has one or more children with special education needs in a regular class setting.

Methodology: A descriptive quantitative approach was employed with the inclusion of open-ended questions to obtain further clarification. Teachers' Attitude Towards Inclusion Scale (TAIS), Teacher Perception of Factors for Successful Inclusive Early Childhood Education (TPSIE), and a self-developed questionnaire were used to gather data for teacher's attitudes, their perception of successful inclusive education, and their knowledge on inclusive education respectively. Data was collected from 40 preschool and 40 primary school teachers.

Results: Results were not significant for all statistical tests, implying that age, working experience, and teaching level had no impact on teachers' attitude and perception towards inclusive education. Among the participants, less than half of them were familiar with the term 'inclusive education', and about 40% of participants were able to elaborate on questions pertaining to their knowledge of inclusive education.

Limitations: Sample size is too small, and both scales used in this study were relatively new. Therefore, results should be approached with caution due to the recent introduction of both scales to the literature base.

Implications: The findings generated discussion on how to overcome various issues in inclusive education, such as further training for teachers and communication between school administration and parents for students to obtain a better adjustment to the school environment. This research implied the need to conduct larger confirmatory studies in a national context and further exploration of more statistical relationships within different variables, as the results showed that over half of the participants held no understanding towards inclusive education.

Research Impact: This study has provided a comprehensive overview of the important aspects surrounding inclusive education, in a national context. By exploring the thoughts of Malaysian teachers towards inclusive education, it is vital that all stakeholders identify and implement pragmatic strategies such as more intensive training for teachers for them to feel competent while dealing with special needs students.

The Influence of Comprehension in Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) on Adolescents' Career Development through Self-Efficacy

Author(s): Benjamin Looi Tink Wei¹, Mimi Fitriana Zaini², Siau Ching Sin³, Mansour Amini¹,
Lee Kam Fong¹

Affiliation(s): ¹UCSI University, Malaysia

²International University of Malaya-Wales, Malaysia

³Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

Type of submission: Oral Presentation

Subthemes: Educational Psychology

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to identify whether TVET as an external factor has an impact on adolescents' career development through self-efficacy as an internal factor. This study also examined the relationship between students' understanding and experience in TVET, career development and self-efficacy among adolescents in Petaling Jaya, Malaysia.

Methodology: A total of 187 students in an international school, aged 15-17 years old, was recruited using convenience sampling.

Results: The results revealed a significant relationship between technical education and general self-efficacy as well as a significant correlation between vocational education and childhood career development. The study also found that vocational education and general self-efficacy were significantly associated. Regression analysis revealed that only vocational education and general self-efficacy had a statistically significant effect on career development. However, technical education and gender as predictors, showed no significant effect on career development and self-efficacy.

Limitations: The current research was limited in the opportunity of visiting a few schools implementing TVET education due to restricted movement during pandemic (MCO), affecting the sample size. Besides, English version of the instruments limited some students' ability in understanding English version of the provided scales.

Implications: The current research implied significant development of TVET model to help improve in the training and teaching quality among TVET teachers as well as in learning strategies among students and their specific career guidance.

Research Impact: The current research provided insights to improve TVET in line with the government of Malaysia to focus on integrating TVET in education and to further develop students' learning career development.

Building A Memory Palace: Method of Loci Training (MoL) Facilitates Word Recall, but not Visuospatial Memory and Attention Span

Author(s): Chong Kam Yan¹, Wong Hoo Keat²

Affiliation(s): ¹ HELP University, Malaysia

² University of Nottingham Malaysia

Type of submission: Oral Presentation

Subthemes: Cognitive Psychology

Purpose: The current study aims to investigate the effect of MoL training on one's cognitive performance, specifically on free recall, serial recall, visuospatial memory, and attention span.

Methodology:

Participant

A final sample of 59 young adults were included in this study with 30 participants (4 males, 26 females; $M_{age} = 21.10$, $SD = 1.32$) training group and 29 participants (4 males, 25 females; $M_{age} = 21.10$, $SD = 10.21$) in control group.

Procedure

Prior to the experiment, participants were randomly assigned into either training or control group. During pretest (Week One), participants were given four cognitive tasks (Free recall task, serial recall task, Corsi Block-Tapping Task, and CPT). A 4-week MoL training was provided to the participants. Participant are required to familiarize and mentally construct the given loci and apply MoL techniques during serial recall task. No training was provided for control group participants. In Week 5, the same four cognitive tasks were given to the participants to complete to serve as posttest.

Results:

- (1) MoL training significantly improved both free recall and serial recall performances.
- (2) the practice duration of MoL technique modulated serial recall performance; after controlling for practice duration, the effect of MoL training on serial recall performance did reduced.
- (3) there was a significant positive correlation between free recall and serial recall performance.
- (4) There was no significant effect of MoL training on visuospatial memory and attention span.

Limitations: The duration of MoL training was limited to four weeks. Dresler et al. (2017) demonstrated that similar brain network connectivity of novices and memory athlete after six weeks of MoL training.

Implications:

Theoretical Implication:

- (1) MoL training may help to overcome proactive interference in both word encoding and recall
- (2) Visuospatial memory was resistant to the enhancement effect four-week MoL training.

Practical Implications:

- (1) the training effect of MoL may be domain-specific and unlikely to transfer across tasks that involves different domain. Hence, hybrid training module (e.g., combine working memory training and MoL training) should be proposed for a holistic improvement in working memory performances.
- (2) MoL training can be implemented to the general population to increase memory retention and enhance the learning process.

Research Impact: MoL training appeared to be effective in improving word recall, but not visuospatial memory and attention span. This training could be generalized to the general population especially in the educational field. These findings shed light on the underlying memory and cognitive mechanism, suggesting the plasticity of working memory.

Concentration Level and Gender on Behaviour Accidents in Selangor

Author(s): Ng Wai Meng, Farrah Sow

Affiliation(s): Quest International University, Malaysia

Type of submission: Virtual Poster

Subthemes: Cognitive Psychology

Purpose: Previous research on accidents in Malaysia have always focused on cognitive load. There is limited to no research examining the impact of inherent concentration ability in affecting traffic behaviour of drivers in Malaysia. This study aims to examine the relationship between driver's concentration level and its influence on traffic behaviour. Gender differences in concentration level and traffic behaviour were also examined.

Methodology: Eighty-one participants were involved in this study. Working Memory Questionnaire (Storage, Executive, Attention Domain as subscales) and Driver Behavior Questionnaire were distributed online using Google Form. Independent sample T-tests were used to compare the scores between gender and concentration level as well as gender and driver's traffic behaviour. Multiple regression was used to see how Storage, Attention and Executive domains contribute to traffic behaviour.

Results: There was a significant negative relationship between the level of concentration and driver's traffic behaviour ($r = .439, p < .01$). The high score in WMQ indicates lower concentration level and the low scores indicate higher concentration level. Hence, the higher the scores indicating lower concentration level, the more behaviour accidents occur. Attention domain was the only significant contributor towards driver's traffic behaviour. There was no significant gender difference for driver's concentration level and traffic behaviour.

Limitations: Using self-reported working memory does not really bring out sufficient impact on traffic behaviour. The study being correlational as well, does not provide a causal link. Furthermore, the number of male and female participants were imbalanced (M=35.2%, F=64.8%).

Implications: The study has shown some interesting results and suggested whether inherent ability in directing working memory attention would more accurately determine a person's likelihood for accidents.

Research Impact: The study provides critical awareness on improving the concentration level of drivers to decrease traffic behaviour through increasing working memory capacity, as well as providing a useful reference for researchers who are interested in the causes of accidents and those who plan any related studies to explore more in testing pure cognitive ability on driver's behaviour.

Development of an Online Cognitive Stimulation Intervention (CSI) for Reducing Age-Related Declines in Healthy Older Adults

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Type of submission: Oral Presentation

Subthemes: Cognitive Psychology

Purpose: Cognitive training has been deemed as a promising intervention to minimize the age-related decline in healthy older adults. However, most research reported using computer-based tasks that have little or poor ecological validity, and thus the impact of such training onto untrained tasks is still unclear. Hence, the aims of this study are as follows: 1) to develop an online cognitive stimulation intervention (CSI) using shopping applications; 2) to evaluate the extent of training gains (inhibition, working memory) and transfer effects (processing speed and episodic memory).

Methodology: 260 healthy older adults are randomly assigned to either the experimental group (CSI), active control group, or passive control group. Both the CSI and active control groups are to attend 24 online weekly sessions, each session took 45-60 minutes to be completed and the overall duration of the training is 6 months. All participants are examined by a series of psychological tests and executive functions (EF) tasks at three time points including the baseline, post-intervention, and a follow-up assessment (one-month post-intervention) for evaluating any possible EF changes resulting from CSI training. While the CSI training involved online shopping tasks targeting inhibition and working memory-updating, the active control group's tasks encompassed online shopping tasks without the training components targeted in the CSI.

Results: The CSI group is expected to have a smaller decline in EF compared to other groups. Moreover, we predict that training gains will transfer to processing speed and episodic memory and it will be maintained over time.

Limitations: The COVID-19 pandemic changed the face-to-face data collection into an online format. According to the older adults' lack of technological literacy, switching to the online training format considerably affected the recruitment rate for this study. Further to this, it has reduced the diversity of the current sample which might influence the generalization of the future results.

Implications: Results of this research will enable us to test proof of concept using online technology for older adults.

Research Impact: CSI might have a promising value in addressing the cognitive well-being of the increasing population of older adults.

Effects of Environmental Noise on Reading Comprehension Performance

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Type of submission: Oral Presentation

Subthemes: Cognitive Psychology

Purpose: Task-irrelevant background speech can disrupt performance in complex cognitive tasks like reading comprehension (Knez & Hygge, 2002). Considering factors like background speech semanticity (Marsh et al., 2008), speech intelligibility (Hongisto, 2005), and task difficulty (Halin et al., 2014), this study investigated the effects of background speech in realistic noise environments on ‘easy’ and ‘hard’ reading comprehension performance. Task performance was hypothesized to decrease with increasing speech intelligibility and semanticity due to increasing cognitive demand in ‘easy task’ only, but not in ‘hard task’ whose complexity could elicit focal task engagement, thereby attenuating speech effects.

Methodology: Thirty-six undergraduate students performed ‘easy’ and ‘hard’ reading comprehension on a computer under five realistic background noise conditions (in decreasing speech intelligibility and semanticity): ‘*speech only*’, ‘*speech masked with library noise*’, ‘*speech masked with outdoor noise*’, and ‘*speech masked with café noise*’, with non-speech ‘*operational/air-conditioning noise*’ (control).

Results: Consistent with our hypothesis, results showed that reading comprehension performance decreased as speech intelligibility and semanticity increased, in ‘easy task’ only. In the more complex ‘hard task’, no significant differences in performance were found across background noise conditions.

Limitations: Only two task difficulty levels were used. Individual differences in English language proficiency were not controlled for.

Implications: Our findings implied that task-irrelevant background speech disrupts easy reading comprehension due to high cognitive demand but not harder reading comprehension that elicits focal task engagement.

Research Impact: This research contributed to the existing knowledge on auditory distraction. The results are generalizable to real-life work/study settings due to the ecologically valid stimuli.

Looking at remembering: Eye movements, pupil size, and autobiographical memory

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Type of submission: Oral Presentation

Subthemes: Cognitive Psychology

Purpose: To examine the relationship between oculomotor behaviour and autobiographical memory, we tested whether memories with strong feelings of recollective experience were accompanied by more fixations. In addition, because larger pupils can denote more cognitive effort, we also tested whether generatively retrieved memories were accompanied by smaller pupils than directly retrieved memories.

Methodology: Eye position and pupil size were recorded while participants first searched for memories and then reconstructed the retrieved memories (Experiment 1) or only searched for memories and indicated whether the memory came to mind instantly and without effort (Experiment 2). In both experiments, participants rated the memories on recollective experience and other memory characteristics.

Results: In Experiment 1, although recollective experience was not associated with the number of fixations per minute, memories that took longer to retrieve were linked to increased pupils. In Experiment 2, generatively retrieved memories were recalled less quickly and accompanied by larger pupils.

Limitations: Participants recalled the memories while looking at a blank screen. To provide a more natural circumstances, future research could use wearable eye-trackers which would allow participants to look anywhere during memory retrieval.

Implications: Whether a memory is retrieved directly or generatively is usually determined by asking participants. The present study is the first to show that generativity retrieved memories are accompanied by larger pupils than directly retrieved memories.

Research Impact: These findings provide compelling evidence that objective measures, such as pupil size, can be used alongside subjective measures, such as self-reports, to distinguish between directly and generativity retrieved memories.

Sensitivity to Auditory Perceptual Cues: Universal or Language-Specific?

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Type of submission: Virtual Poster

Subthemes: Cognitive Psychology

Purpose: Kelantan Malay (KM) has an unusual presence of word-initial phonemic contrasts: singleton and geminate consonants. Extending from a previous study that tested native KM speakers, Kelantan Chinese (KC) non-speakers, and non-Kelantanese (NK) Malay non-speakers, we investigated whether exposure to this phonemic contrast would help preserve discrimination sensitivity to it in a new language. The effects of language exposure on the retention of phonemic contrast discrimination sensitivity were also examined.

Methodology: 16 Arabic native speakers (Exposure Group; EG) and 16 Malaysian Chinese native speakers (No-Exposure Group; NG) were examined by measuring their discrimination accuracy percentage (%) of the KM singleton and geminate consonants. The participants listened to two consecutive auditory stimuli (e.g., /tido/ and /ttido/) and had to decide whether the pair they heard were the same or different.

Results: EG performed better than NG. When compared across all 5 groups (KM, KC, NK, EG, NG), NG performed the worst. EG and NG performed worse than native KM speakers.

Limitations: Knowledge of other languages may have influenced performance for EG and NG. Factors like phonemic contrast position and context difference must be considered in future replications.

Implications: Although EG and NG could discriminate against the phonemic contrast, their performance was poorer as compared to the other groups. These results imply that there is an effect of language exposure on the retention of phonemic contrast discrimination sensitivity. Hence, it can be concluded that sensitivity to auditory perceptual cues are more language-specific than universal.

Research Impact: This research could explain the difficulty in learning and perceiving a non-native/second language.

Temporal Cues Reduce the Expressiveness Required to Classify Facial Expressions

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Type of submission: Oral Presentation

Subthemes: Cognitive Psychology

Purpose: Classification of facial expressions is known to be facilitated by contextual cues (e.g., affective scenes) that temporally precede the face. While previous studies often used static faces with greater intensities of expressiveness, it is unclear whether contextual cues could reduce the level of expressiveness required to classify facial expressions.

Methodology: Twenty-four participants were presented a series of video clips (extracted from TV shows) depicting a happy scenario or an angry scenario leading to sarcasm. Immediately after watching each video, participants judged a dynamic facial expression—unfolding from neutral to either happy or sarcastic, in increasing intensity—as “happy” or “sarcastic”. We restricted judgements to a limited duration to ensure that time to judge (“response time”) can be used as a measure to infer the intensity of the expression required (i.e., expressiveness).

Results: We found that response times were lower when the context predicted the facial expression (e.g., happy expression and happy context), compared to when it did not. Therefore, predictive temporal cues can reduce the expressiveness required to classify facial expressions.

Limitations: Given that our contexts included multiple cues (e.g., body language and tone of movie characters), it is difficult to pinpoint which (or if all) cues contributed to this congruency effect.

Implications: The highly contextualized nature of facial expressions may help us to quickly register subtle facial expressions often encountered in real-life.

Research Impact: Our findings raise the possibility that people with deficits in recognizing everyday expressions (e.g., Prosopagnosics) may have difficulties in incorporating contextual cues, spawning more research into this.

The Association between Empathy and Prosocial Behaviour among Malaysian Youths: Emotion Regulation as the Mediator

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Type of submission: Oral Presentation

Subthemes: Cognitive Psychology

Purpose: Recent studies revealed increasing youth involvement in antisocial behaviours as the sign of decrease in prosocial tendencies. Past studies found contradicting correlations between cognitive empathy (CE) and affective empathy (AE) with prosocial behaviour (PB). Therefore, the current study investigated the role of emotion regulation, including cognitive reappraisal (CR) and emotion suppression (ES), to mediate associations between these variables.

Methodology: 204 Malaysian participants within the age range of 15 to 24 (76 males and 128 females; mean age 20.34, SD = 2.24) were recruited through convenience sampling. The study utilized Questionnaire of Cognitive and Affective Empathy, Prosocial Tendencies Measured-Revised and Emotion Regulation Questionnaire.

Results: Bivariate analysis showed CE and AE had significant positive correlations with PB. CE showed significant positive associations with ES and CR whereas AE showed non-significant positive correlations with ES and CR. Regression analysis revealed ES and CR partially mediate the relationship between CE and PB. For AE, CR partially mediates it, whereas ES does not.

Limitations: Past research showed cultural differences on emotional regulation between different Asian countries, thus results are likely ungeneralizable outside Malaysian culture. Accuracy of study is reliant on honesty of participants; self-report bias may occur.

Implications: Results suggest emotion regulation, especially cognitive reappraisal, influences how Malaysian youths experience empathy and express prosocial behaviour. High empathy may show higher prosocial tendencies when youths regulate emotions with strategies.

Research Impact: Possible approaches that family and society can take to cultivate a prosocial culture among Malaysian youths is by educating youth on emotional regulation strategies.

The Effect of Types of Video Games on Inhibition and Cerebral Hemispheric Activation

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Type of submission: Oral Presentation

Subthemes: Cognitive Psychology

Purpose: Playing action video games requires a range of cognitive skills (e.g., visual perception, selective attention, and task switching) and could improve said skills. However, the skills trained in non-action games which emphasizes planning are less understood. We examined the effect of video games on inhibition (response inhibition and distractor inhibition) and cerebral hemispheric activation over four weeks.

Methodology: Sixty-seven non-habitual video game players (20-39 years-old) played either a puzzle game ($n = 19$), TBS game ($n = 24$) or real-time strategy game (RTS; $n = 24$) for four weeks on their smartphones. Measures of inhibition tasks (i.e., stop-signal task, Stroop task, and Multi-Source Interference Task) were taken before and after playing the games. Tympanic membrane temperatures (TMT) for each ear were measured to infer hemispheric activation. We included working memory as a covariate in our analyses.

Results: Results showed that puzzle games improved response inhibition, and that RTS games had increased left TMT, indicating increased left hemispheric activity which reflects increased impulsivity. There was no significant change in the distractor inhibition over time across game type.

Limitations: The difference in the in-game reward systems and participants' game satisfaction could have acted as confounds.

Implications: Our findings suggest that puzzle games involving logical contradiction could improve response inhibition, showing potential as alternative tools in inhibition training.

Research Impact: This could help in identifying or designing training tools to improve response inhibition to train military personnel and individuals with impaired response inhibition (e.g., individuals with Internet Gaming Disorder).

Can child-initiated play help to improve social communication skills among children with autistic traits? A single-subject experimental design

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Type of submission: Oral Presentation

Subthemes: Clinical Psychology

Purpose: Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterised by deficits in social communication and interaction skills. Past studies have shown that child-initiated play encourages social communication skill development in children. Thus, the present study aimed to explore the effects of a child-initiated play intervention on social communication skills among children with ASD traits in Malaysia.

Methodology: A single-subject experimental research design was chosen to measure the effects of child-initiated play intervention on social communication skills by comparing the communication skills from pre-test and post-tests of single subjects. Three pre-school children (aged 5-6 years) displaying ASD traits from Kota Kinabalu participated in the study. The intervention was introduced to each subject at different times based on a multiple baseline design for a total of 42 hours which run across 14 days. Social communication skills were measured using the Early Social Communication Scale.

Results: The social communication skills among all three subjects have improved despite the introduction of the child-initiated play intervention at different times. The results showed an increase in level and trend with short latency. This result supported the positive effects of child-initiated play intervention among children displaying ASD traits.

Limitations: The main limitation found was the inconsistencies of scores during the intervention phase shown by sudden dips in scores caused by extraneous factors such as subjects' moods and health conditions. These fluctuations could cause the internal validity to be questioned. The limited number of participants also limit the generalisation of the effectiveness of the intervention.

Implications: This study has provided insight on the effectiveness of child-initiated play intervention whereby special needs educators may adopt this intervention when dealing with children displaying ASD traits.

Research Impact: The results indicated that child-initiated play intervention is able to increase social communication skills among children with ASD traits which provides a foundation for future studies to build upon and advance the concept of child-initiated play in Malaysia.

Face Recognition and Holistic Processing: Role of Holistic Processing in Developmental Prosopagnosia

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Type of submission: Oral Presentation

Subthemes: Clinical Psychology

Purpose: Prosopagnosics are known to have a deficit in recognising faces and it is believed to be caused by their impaired ability to holistically process faces. However, the findings are mixed in this regard, most likely because studies often use one or two of these different measures of holistic processing which are poorly correlated with each other and could measure different aspects of holistic processing. Here we aimed to gain a clearer insight into the role of holistic processing in prosopagnosia by using all three main measures of holistic processing, as well as other evaluation measures of face and object recognition.

Methodology: Groups of Developmental Prosopagnosics (N= 10) and neurotypicals (N= 10) were recruited to complete a battery of tests: (1) measuring different aspects of holistic processing in faces (e.g., inversion task, part-whole task, composite task), (2) holistic processing in non-face objects (e.g., Navon's task), and (3) face recognition abilities (Cambridge Face Memory test; CFMT).

Results: Among all four of the holistic processing tasks, participants had more accurate recognition performance in three of the tasks (e.g., part-whole, inversion, Navon's task) when they were required to process stimuli (faces and non-face objects) holistically, than by their component features. Although the Prosopagnosics had relatively lower face recognition abilities (i.e., significantly poorer performance in CFMT, part-whole and inversion task, but not in the composite task, both the Developmental Prosopagnosics and neurotypicals showed holistic advantages during face recognition. Moreover, only the part-whole task is correlated with the face recognition abilities (i.e., CFMT).

Limitations: There may be cultural differences among participants in this study (e.g., United Kingdom, United States, Europe etc.). We also had a limited number of Acquired Prosopagnosics for the group comparison analysis. Furthermore, sample size is too small and scores were non-distributed for a regression-based analysis.

Implications: Prosopagnosics seem to have poor recognition abilities despite experiencing similar levels of holistic advantage. Similar to previous literature, the performance was different in all three face holistic tasks, which argues these holistic tasks might be measuring different holistic mechanism(s).

Research Impact: Our study contradicts the notion that holistic processing is impaired in Prosopagnosics. Additionally, our study suggested that these holistic tasks may measure different underlying mechanisms.

Corporal Punishment Experience, Approach-Avoidance Temperaments and Parenting Styles on Parent-Child Closeness in Malaysia

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Type of Submission: Virtual Poster

Subthemes: Developmental Psychology

Purpose: The objectives were to investigate the relationships between corporal punishment experience, approach-avoidance temperaments, parenting styles, and parent-child closeness; raise awareness and provide findings based in Malaysian context.

Methodology: Participants were 201 Malaysian undergraduates from different universities, age ranging from 18 to 25 years old. Participants completed an online survey that included a demographic questionnaire, Corporal Punishment Measure, Parental Authority Questionnaire--Modified Version, Approach-Avoidance Temperament Questionnaire and Parental Closeness Measure.

Results: Findings indicated that there was a significant negative relationship between corporal punishment and parent-child closeness. Individuals with approach temperament had higher parent-child closeness than individuals with avoidance temperament. Also, authoritative parenting and authoritarian parenting predicted parent-child closeness, where authoritative parenting has larger effect than authoritarian parenting.

Limitations: The use of referent age of 13 in the Corporal Punishment Measure. There is a possibility of the reduction on corporal punishment on children after the age of 12. And, the inability to remember past experiences was also one of the limitation.

Implications: The importance of understanding the effect of corporal punishment and types of parenting styles on parent-child closeness. Parents should treat each of their children as unique individuals that have different temperaments. It is pivotal that Malaysian population begin to evolve from what they deemed as culture to something that is less damaging and more beneficial.

Research Impact: Mostly on the Malaysian's population, especially, parents. It could also be generalized to other Asian countries due to the fact that Malaysia is a multicultural country.

Cold Hearts Playing with Fire: Dark Triad, Risk-taking and Empathy

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Type of submission: Virtual Poster

Subthemes: Personality Psychology

Purpose: The empathetic and risk-taking nature of Dark Triad personalities have well been studied independently and extensively. However, research on combined attributes of the two variables along with elements of Dark Triad has been absent. The present study aims to address this gap by examining the association between Dark Triad of personality, empathy, and risk-taking in five commonly encountered domains – ethical, financial, health/safety, social, and recreational.

Methodology: A sample of 158 Malaysians ($M=59$, $F=98$, $M_{age}=21.9$, $SD=1.61$) completed the Short Dark Triad Questionnaire, Empathy Scale, and Domain-Specific Risk-Taking Scale through an online survey.

Results: All Dark Triad traits were positively associated with risk-taking in ethical, financial and health/safety domains. Ethical risk-taking was significantly predicted by total Dark Triad and empathy.

Limitations: The Dark Triad traits were studied as unidimensional attributes; hence, lower order facets of the Dark Triad traits, such as primary and secondary psychopathy, were not addressed.

Implications: This study expanded existing knowledge on Dark Triad personalities by demonstrating a link between each trait and a larger paradigm of risk behaviours. Given that only Machiavellianism and psychopathy were found to be weakly correlated with low empathy, the study has suggested a possible role of cultural values in affecting the sensitivity to others.

Research Impact: The present study provided empirical support to the possible damaging effects Dark Triad personalities can exert in society. To avoid putting executive decisions in the hand of malevolent risk-takers, it is crucial for employers to assess for Dark Triad personalities prior to the promotion of new leaders.

The Association between the Dark Triad, Mental Well-Being and Cyberbullying Intentions

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Type of submission: Virtual Poster

Subthemes: Personality Psychology

Purpose: Cyberbullying is a major issue in Malaysia, however, its predictors are not clearly established. Previous studies indicated that the dark triad (DT) which includes Machiavellianism, Narcissism and Psychopathy may be associated with well-being and cyberbullying. Hence the purpose of the study is to determine relationships between the DT, mental well-being and cyberbullying intention.

Methodology: A total of 124 Malaysians aged 19-29 ($M=22.98$, $SD=2.55$) were recruited and completed the Short Dark Triad scale, the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale; and Cyberbullying Perpetration Measure.

Results: There are positive correlations between all three DT traits and cyberbullying intentions.

There was no correlation between mental well-being and the overall DT score. Multiple regression showed that psychopathy is the most significant predictor for cyberbullying intentions.

Limitations: This research focused on a limited number of factors that may predict cyberbullying intentions, and more variables should be considered for further studies. Other informant reports such as family, peers, and educators, were not included, thus, social desirability response may compromise the validity of this study.

Implications: The research showed that individuals who score high in the DT would potentially carry out the act of cyberbullying intentions. Therefore, it is necessary to explore other potential factors that may prevent cyberbullying or increase a chance of onset of this behaviour, e.g. emotional intelligence, self-esteem or peer influence.

Research Impact: School counsellors may use the DT measurement to identify potential at-risk individuals. An intervention could be implemented in order to reduce the cyberbullying rate in Malaysia.

Psychological Coping Strategies of Female adolescent offenders in Juvenile Detention Centers in Tangerang, Indonesia

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Type of submission: Oral Presentation

Subthemes: Social, Community, Cross-Cultural Psychology

Purpose: As there has been a high number of 23% prisoners' suicide rate, the current research was conducted to explore female prisoners' coping strategies to promote and enhance their well-beings as well as to alleviate the chances of occurrence of their suicidal thoughts and behaviours. Gender-specific research was another focus to expose female prisoners' perspective and their specific experiences.

Methodology: Qualitative research and semi-structured interviews were conducted to seven informants in two correctional institutions, Tangerang, Indonesia. Thematic analysis enabled the identification of the main findings from the research questions.

Results: Female juvenile offenders used emotion-focused coping to enhance their psychological and mental well-being to promote cognitive functioning and behavioural adaptability as well as to minimize the occurrence of psychological and other stress-related problems living with inadequate facilities and strict regulations in the prison.

Limitations: There was limited range of research questions performed during interview, due to the timing and opportunity of entry into the institutions with limited chance in the selection of female prisoners, based on the officers' preferences.

Implications: The current research implied the development of support group interventions with the mental health programmes promoted by the social workers on duty, to increase female offenders' well-beings.

Research Impact: This research brought such enormous contributions in the development of family and community intervention as strengthening the offenders' intra-familial relationship and community supports which would also be the focus of various fields in social psychology, counselling, and mental health. Female personal empowerment programme was another contribution for the equivalent visibility in the care of the offenders.

Family Functioning and Life Satisfaction among Malaysian Adolescents

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Type of submission: Oral Presentation

Subthemes: Social, Community, Cross-Cultural Psychology

Purpose: Life satisfaction was found to be very crucial for one's development. Thus, this study aimed to investigate the level of life satisfaction in different types of family functioning (balanced, midrange, and unbalanced) among Malaysian adolescents. The predicting effects of the dimensions of family functioning (cohesion and flexibility) on adolescents' life satisfaction were also examined.

Methodology: A total of 852 adolescents (51% males; $M = 14.8$ years) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia were recruited using multistage cluster sampling. The participants completed the self-administered questionnaires which consisted of the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale III and Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale. Participants were divided into three family functioning types based on the cut-off scores of cohesion and flexibility.

Results: As hypothesised, one-way ANOVA analysis showed that adolescents with balanced family functioning were more satisfied with life compared to those with midrange and unbalanced family functioning. Besides, Standard Multiple Regression analysis revealed that family cohesion significantly predicted adolescents' life satisfaction.

Limitations: The data collection only included non-clinical samples, which limit the generalisability of the research findings to severely disturbed adolescents.

Implications: Family members should focus on achieving a balanced family functioning in order to be more satisfied with life. Intervention to boost adolescents' life satisfaction should also focus on family cohesion, instead of family flexibility.

Research Impact: Mental health practitioners may benefit from this study. When working with adolescents with low life satisfaction, it is important to determine the adolescents' family functioning type and improve the cohesiveness of their family.

The Effect of Gender and Race Similarity on Moral Decision Making

Author(s): Priscilla Chuah Ning-Xin, Grace Yap Chin Choo, Yong Min Hooi

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Type of submission: Oral Presentation

Subthemes: Social, Community, Cross-Cultural Psychology

Purpose: This study investigated the effects of gender and race similarity on an individual's moral decision involving a stranger's suffering.

Methodology: 83 young adults participated in a quasi-experiment were grouped by race and gender. Participants would decide the suffering of a stranger (poised by a confederate) in exchange for prizes; the longer the suffering, the bigger the prize for the decider.

Results: The impact of race similarity was significant, with Chinese allocated lesser time than Non-Chinese. Contrary to expectation, gender similarity showed that males allocated less time than females. Race and gender together did not yield any significant results for the sufferings of others.

Limitations: Manipulation checks on the perceived attractiveness and similarity were not measured. The presence of an experimenter might suggest bystander effect as a confounding variable.

Implications: The theoretical framework is based on self-categorization theory and social identity theory. First impressions were formed based on salient cues and characteristics of the person, such as gender and race. All participants were strangers to the confederate, which strengthened the effect of surface-level diversity (demographic differences) and weakened the effect of deep-level diversity (value similarity); hence focusing more on superficial surface characteristics to form first impressions.

Research Impact: Findings can be generalised to and across other situations and shed lights on how demographic similarity could influence social behaviour and response. Besides, this study serves as a powerful yet vital reminder to all decision makers of the existence of personal bias during emergencies. It also advanced our knowledge in prosocial study and on the ways to effectively promote prosocial behaviour.

The Levels of Empathy, Sympathy and Helping Attitudes Under Prolonged Life Crisis: A Refugee Study

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Type of submission: Oral Presentation

Subthemes: Social, Community, Cross-Cultural Psychology

Purpose: Individuals with prolonged life crisis are individuals who have undergone past sufferings and trauma for an extended period of time. This study aimed to understand the relationship between empathy, sympathy and helping attitudes under prolonged life crisis; and, to determine if empathy and sympathy serve as predictors of helping attitudes.

Methodology: This study recruited 56 refugees, representing individuals living under prolonged life crisis and 56 Malaysians without an experience of prolonged life crisis. The participants answered a survey that included Multidimensional Emotional Empathy Scale, Trait Sympathy Scale and Helping Attitudes Scale. Independent Samples T-test and standard multiple regression were used to analyse the data.

Results: Individuals with prolonged life crisis were found to have lower levels of empathy, sympathy and helping attitudes compared to those who did not. Empathy and sympathy were also found to predict helping attitudes.

Limitations: The perception of life crisis in the refugees was not determined. An individual may interpret life crisis differently due to personal coping mechanisms.

Implications: This study has allowed a better insight to the traits present in individuals with prolonged life crisis. This study has shown that prolonged life crisis may to a certain extent cause changes in an individual's altruistic traits.

Originality/Value: This study urges the authorities to render more help to the prolonged life crisis community and help to foster a closer understanding of this special population that is otherwise neglected by the general society.

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