



**MIDDLE TENNESSEE
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION
SPRING MEETING**

April 17, 2010

**Keynote Speaker
Dr. Richard Walker
Winston Salem State University**

**How Autobiographical Memory Deal with Emotion:
The Fading Affect Bias**

POSTER SESSION 9:30-10:30
Morgan University Center 303-305

1. Gender's affect of Social Distance

Lydia Njoroge & Dr. Tom Brinthaup
Middle Tennessee State University

In an attempt to better understand the factors that going into deciding who to form relationships with, this study is aimed at analyzing how different internalized self-schemas rate a target audience. More specifically, data from traditionally gendered males and female (masculine males and feminine females) will be compared to their androgynous counter parts to see what differences, if any, exist. It is expected that traditionally gendered participants will demonstrate a desire for more social than androgynous participants based on Bem's research on avoidance of cross-sexed behavior.

2. The Truth about Cheating in Video Games

Matthew J Carlton & Dr. Tom Brinthaup
Middle Tennessee State University

Because Video Games are a relatively new phenomenon, there are many research questions that have yet to be examined. One overlooked area is the behavior of cheating while playing these games. In this study, a sample of college students played through rounds of the video game called "Unreal Tournament". While playing, they were given the opportunity to cheat by typing in codes that gave them enhanced abilities within the game. This study also looked at the effects that environmental cues (I.E., a Pro-cheating, VS. an Anti-cheating message), and perceived opponents (Human, or Computer) had on the frequency that the participants cheated.

3. A Study of Delayed Disengagement of Attention: Pictures Versus Words

Robert Baudo & Dr. Stephen Schmidt
Middle Tennessee State University

In this experiment, varying stimuli are compared to determine which grabs and retains attention more. In the experiment, participants are viewing set pairs of stimuli (either a picture and a word or two words). The picture or the first word in the two-word set can be either emotionally arousing or neutral. Participants are to rate their emotional response. Following the rating task, participants are given a free recall and are asked to recall the second stimuli from each pair set. The goal is to determine whether emotional pictures or words grab attention and effect memory more.

4. Demand Characteristics

Sam Holloway, Robert Little, Richard Cowden & Dr. Will Langston
Middle Tennessee State University

This study measured the possible influence of demand characteristics in opinion surveys. Our hypothesis was if previous research provided to participants shows bias, then demand characteristics will influence rating of samples. We gave three groups an opinion survey, each group with a previous research favoring either Gatorade, PowerAde, or no favorite. In reality, neither Gatorade nor PowerAde were used for either sample, but a third sports drink, Vitamin Water. We expect to find that participants' ratings will be consistent with previous research bias. This would suggest that demand characteristics would influence opinion when rating samples.

5. Barnum Effect and Music

Clayton Thomas, Nicole Ahima, Colin Robinson & Dr. William Langston
Middle Tennessee State University

The question for this research is what causes people to identify with a song. Our hypothesis is that the participants will identify with general

songs and in turn display the Barnum effect. To test this hypothesis participants listened to a specific song and a general song. After listening to the songs “Goodbye Earl” and “Without You” by the Dixie Chicks, the participants filled out a Likert type survey to identify which song they felt described them the most. We expect to find that the general song will result in a stronger correlation to the Barnum Effect. This would suggest that general songs are more popular as a result of people thinking they describe and relate to their lives.

6. Messages in Music

Matt Stevens, Erin Case, Candice Lowe & Dr. William Langston
Middle Tennessee State University

In homage with the taboo stigma of the 1980’s craze of subliminal messages within music, i.e. Led Zeppelin and AC/DC, we have constructed and implemented an experiment with the same question: If a song is played in reverse is there really a message, or is the message inferred based solely upon suggestion from the researcher? We implied suggestion of a message, suggestion of a Christian message, suggestion of a Satanic message, or no suggestion with the song, Miley Cyrus’s “Party in the USA”, presented in reverse to a sample group. We expect that the participants will follow along with implied suggestion and find messages within the music depending on what implied suggestion is presented to the participant before the music sample is played in reverse. This would suggest that human nature is very susceptible to suggestion from someone of authority or presence, for example a researcher.

7. The Power of Suggestibility: Will Ideomotor Effects Cause Someone to Believe a Plastic Surface is More or Less Sticky?

Robert Ray, Susan Vaughn, Donna Shoults & Dr. William Langston
Middle Tennessee State University

In our study, will participants rate a plastic surface more or less sticky based on ideomotor effects influencing their behavior unconsciously? Participants will be divided into two groups and will start our experiment by

getting a baseline read of the plastic surface; this will be “0” for the purposes of our experiment. Then, each group will be told to rate the stickiness of the plastic surface again after placing their other hand (the right hand) over both a red and a green sheet of paper. One group will be told that while their hand is held above the red sheet of paper that the plastic surface will feel stickier, the other will be told that the green will incite more stickiness. Stickiness will be rated on a scale of -5 to 5, -5 being far less sticky and 5 being much stickier. After data is gathered, we will observe the effects. Our assumption is that the group who thinks the red paper will cause more stickiness will rate the plastic surface as more sticky; likewise, the group who is told that the green paper will cause more stickiness will rate the surface as more sticky. The whole point of this study is to prove that ideomotor effects (suggestibility) unconsciously influence behavior.

8. Sports Fans' Rituals and Paranormal Beliefs

Adam Emerson, Emily Pilaczynski, Melinda Gilmore & Dr. William Langston
Middle Tennessee State University

In sports, athletes have ritualistic behaviors they feel give them a better chance of winning. Fans are known to have similar habits, including rituals involving what they wear, what they eat, where they watch their sport, and so on. We believe sports fans who believe they are helping their team by engaging in this ritualistic behavior are more likely to have paranormal beliefs. We measured this by identifying sports fans, who then reported rituals they engage in and completed a paranormal belief scale. We expect to find a significant correlation between adherence to rituals and belief in paranormal events. This would suggest sports fans' rituals are an extension of the magical thinking observed in those who believe in paranormal events.

9. Positive Personality Potential

Kyle Thorne, Morgan Matchok, Kandace Kilcoyne & Dr. William Langston
Middle Tennessee State University

This study examines how the Barnum effect is related to personality differences; specifically that of optimism and pessimism. The Barnum effect (also known as the Forer effect) is the understanding that individuals will give a high accuracy rating to a personality description that is supposedly generated specifically for them, but is, in fact, a vague and generalized result that could apply to a wide range of people. It is our prediction that optimistic people will be more susceptible to the Barnum effect than pessimistic individuals. We gave out a "Big 5" personality test to a group of college students (from a psychology class of 29 people called "Psychology of Happiness and Wellbeing") and after we received their answers, we reviewed their results for positive traits; the idea being that people who have selected more positive traits will be more optimistic people in the general sense of the word. We gave back a vague set of results to the participants and they rated it on its accuracy. We expect to find people expressing positive personality traits on the Big 5 test to rate the returned "analysis" higher than others.

10. Does scent have an effect on learning and memory?

Jeremy Hays, Brittany Cates, David Benneyworth, Mason Holt & Dr. Steve Schmidt
Middle Tennessee State University

Previous research has shown that scent can have an effect on short term memory recall tasks. In the present study, participants were given a matched pairing of words and tested on the material immediately after studying and then again a week later. They either studied and tested with the presence of the same scent, without any scent present, or with two different scents, one present during studying and short-term testing and the other scent present during the long-term memory testing. What we want to know is whether or not the presence of scent and the type of scent play a role in learning and explicit memory recall.

11. The Effects of Magical Thinking.

Alethea Kelly, Jesse Pollom, Lorelco Mulzac & Dr. William Langston
Middle Tennessee State University

Our experiment intends to measure whether or not someone having evil thoughts prior to an event feels like they caused the event more. We will conduct a Haitian voodoo experiment where participants poke toothpicks into a voodoo doll resembling the confederate. The confederate will play the victim every time and will be very rude half of the experiments and neutral the other half of the experiments. We expect that the participant involved with the rude confederate will be more likely to feel that their harsh thoughts toward the confederate were causal than the participants involved with the neutral confederate. This would suggest that people exhibit magical thinking.

12. Compliance with the Pique Technique

Tanya Luffman, Angel Perrin & Dr. William Langston
Middle Tennessee State University

If an automatic -refusal script is interrupted then a person will be more likely to comply with a request. The principal investigator will ask the participants to give change to help with a ride and we will ask other participants to give change to help with a ride to a therapist. The co-principal investigator will be recording observations such as gender, if money was given and the amount of money given. We expect to find that when asked to help with a ride to a therapist, participants will comply more often and give more money than if our justification for receiving money is ordinary. When a person's thought process is interrupted with an unusual request, the person should be more likely to comply.

13. Relationship Between Magical Thinking and Paranormal Belief

Stacey Bates, Naly Phongsouvanh, Wesley Wortham & Dr. William Langston

Middle Tennessee State University

We hypothesize that a correlation exists between magical thinking and paranormal belief. Participants of the experiment were asked to visualize correctly calling a coin toss and then called an actual coin toss. Participants were informed that the call was correct. The participants then answered questions about magical thinking and paranormal belief. We expect to see a positive correlation between magical thinking and paranormal belief. This would suggest that people with magical thinking tend to also have belief in the paranormal.

14. Superstition and Test Performance

Kayleigh Elrod, Candice Black, Charity Jackson & Dr. William Langston

Middle Tennessee State University

If people engage in superstitious behaviors before a test, then they should be more likely to have less anxiety. The experiment observed two different sections of the same college class. Participants were given a survey about anxiety levels and rituals used. We expected to see that students who engaged in superstitious rituals would have less anxiety.

15. Class Year and Student Expectation of Grade Inflation

Amanda Roman, Katelyn Tusky & Dr. William Langston

Middle Tennessee State University

It is hypothesized that students in lower level classes will show expectations of higher grades in relation to their work quality as compared to those in upper level courses. Student surveys were given to two psychology classes, an introductory class and a 4000 level class. One question in the survey asked students to state their expected final grade in

the class and another asked students to state the quality of their work according to the university handbook designations. We expect to see students in the introductory class to predict a higher overall grade in relation to their quality of work, which would mean the more time spent in college level classes results in a decrease in the expectation for grade inflation.

16. Detecting if people can tell that they are stared at

Izabela Kozon, Greg Franklin & Dr. William Langston
Middle Tennessee State University

The question in our project is if people really can tell that they are stared at or they just have confirmation bias. People in the MTSU campus library and in the cafeteria filled out a survey about their feelings in the past 5 minutes. Half of them were stared at for 5 minutes and the second half were not. We expect to see that most of the people will answer that they did not feel any different. That would mean people cannot tell that they are stared at, but they think that they can because of confirmation bias.

17. Paranormal Influences

Cassica Grady, Tabitha Kemp & Dr. William Langston
Middle Tennessee State University

When considering the paranormal, does the influence of other people affect what an individual believes or will come to believe? We think so. With the use of a brief survey, we will poll other students on their thoughts on social influences on paranormal belief. We expect to see that social aspects will have a great affect on belief in the paranormal. This would mean that more people believe in paranormal events if they have friends or peers that also believe in these things.

18. Delayed Disengagement of Automatic Processing

Cristie Goad, Darrin Hall & Dr. Stephen Schmidt
Middle Tennessee State University

In everyday life, there are certain situations occurring that cause an individual to stop and think, “What just happened?” Some of these situations require more of our attention than others due to their effect on the individual's emotional responses. A series of experiments were designed to see if we could uncover why certain stimuli hold an individual's attention longer than others, as well as what affect the stimuli has on that individual's emotions. We named this process, accordingly, “Delayed disengagement of attention to a stimulus”. That is, the individual is still thinking of the previous stimuli when they should have moved on to another activity. Our first experiment examined delayed disengagement while performing automatic versus controlled processing tasks. Our second experiment took a closer look at how emotions affect automatic processing of stimuli. Our final experiment investigated the reaction times in a simple choice reaction time task. Findings show that negative-arousing pictures slow response time in automatic processing tasks.

19. Development and Validation of the Need for Cognition about Behavior in Relationships Scale

Rachel A Connor & Lara K Ault, Ph.D
Tennessee State University

The present study is validating an individual difference measure called Need for Cognition about Behavior in Relationships (NCBR). The researchers modified the already validated Need for Cognition scale (NC; Cacioppo, Petty, & Kao, 1984) by changing and adding items such that they refer to the tendency to analyze, contemplate, and re-experience behaviors emitted by an influential person in one's environment, such as a boss or relationship partner. Sixty-four college-student participants at Tennessee State University completed the 15-item NCBR, the NC scale, the Depressive Attributional Style measure (Peterson & Villanova, 1988), and the Ruminative Response Scale (Treynor, Gonzalez, & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2003). The NCBR showed good inter-item reliability and

correlated moderately positively with some of the other measures, suggesting partial overlap of constructs. There was more overlap than expected with the Ruminative Response Scale. There was no significant relationship between the NCBR scale and the NC, indicating discriminant validity from this established measure. Additional analyses, including thought-to-word ratios in the form of written thoughts and feelings in response to upsetting and relational stimuli, are pending.

20. The Effects of the Attitudes and Beliefs Students Hold towards Others with Disabilities

Randall Boen & Dr. Nicole Knickmeyer
Austin Peay State University

The purpose of the current study is to evaluate students' attitudes towards educational accommodations given to their fellow students who may have disabilities. This study was conducted at Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, Tennessee. According to cited research in this paper, many students with disabilities may feel isolated and perceive hostility from others. This study utilized two scales developed by Upton and Harper (2001). Which were used to understand the either fair or unfair perceptions student's hold toward educational accommodations. For this study, 401 undergraduate participants were surveyed. In addition to the survey, demographic information was gathered from each student including education level, undergraduate major, and relationships with individuals with disabilities. The information gathered from the surveys was the basis for this study. Results from this study include evidence to support that number of years spent in college influences perceptions of fairness toward accommodations. Furthermore, particular college majors were found to be higher or lower on each scale when compared with other majors. Finally, the last finding from this study showed no differences in perceptions of fairness between the participants who noted having some form of relationship (i.e. child, friend, relative), and those participants who noted no relationship. This study can be used as a basis for further examination and understanding of how educational accommodations are viewed by students with learning disabilities.

21. Preliminary Investigation of Video-based Skills Training

Carlos N. Freeman, Elizabeth D. Cummins, Amy L. Hughes,
Rebecca L. Hangge, Dr. Leigh P. Schmitt & Dr. Kevin R. Harris
Austin Peay State University

Current research is often aimed at comparing the relative effectiveness of computer-based training methods versus traditional, live trainer methods within the academic setting (e.g., Simon & Werner, 1996). In the present study, identical instructions for construction of a paper origami figurine are presented either via a live trainer, or video displayed on a computer screen of the trainer in order to determine each methods' relative effectiveness for skill acquisition. Moreover, the present study also investigates how individual personality differences may moderate the effectiveness of the training method in skill acquisition. We propose that introverts may perform better with the videotaped trainer, while extroverts may perform better with the live trainer. College students volunteered to participate in the present study. Upon arrival, participants are asked to fill out a Big Five Inventory (BFI;-John & Strvastava, 2009),-personality assessment survey and are randomly assigned to a training condition of either written instruction, video training segment presented on a computer, or a live trainer. Mean rating results for the live trainer method were significantly higher than mean rating results for the video training method and mean rating for the video method were significantly higher than mean rating results for the written training method.

22. The Addictive Properties of Soft Drink Consumption Using a CTA Animal Model for Addiction

Elizabeth D. Cummins, Carlos N. Freeman, Amy L. Hughes, Krysttel
C. Miller & Dr. Brian J. Hock
Austin Peay State University

This study further developed a behavioral model for addiction to test the APA's seventh criteria for dependency, namely continued use despite adverse consequences. The model was used to investigate potential

addictive properties, of either caffeine or sweetener, of soft drinks. For a period of 14 days, animals orally self-administered Coke®, Caffeine Free Coke®, Diet Coke®, or Caffeine Free Diet Coke® and consumption was recorded daily. On day 15, rats were water deprived, exposed to 10% apple juice mixture, and administered an intraperitoneal injection of .15M lithium chloride at 2% of body weight to provide a conditioned taste aversion. On day 16, animals were given access to 10% apple juice/treatment mixture vs. alternative soft drink; consumption was recorded. Results of this study showed animals consumed substances containing sugar paired with apple juice more than those containing caffeine. These findings suggest sugar to be a more addictive property of soft drinks compared to caffeine.

23. The Addictive Properties of Sweetener Consumption Using a CTA Animal Model for Addiction

Carlos N. Freeman, Elizabeth D. Cummins, Jessica Ostland,
Catherine Tucker & Dr. Brian J. Hock
Austin Peay State University

This study looks to investigate sugar addiction using the APA's seventh criteria for dependency, namely continued use despite adverse consequences. For a period of 14 days, animals orally self-administered a water mixture with either cane sugar, Stevia, Splenda or Agave. On day 15, the rats were exposed to 10% apple juice mixture, and immediately following received an intraperitoneal injection of .15M lithium chloride at 2% body weight to induce a conditioned taste aversion (CTA). On day 16, the rats were given access to the apple juice/sweetener mixture vs. regular water and the amount consumed recorded. The findings suggest that all forms of sugar were addictive.

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