STUDENT RESEARCH AWARDS 2021.
Singapore’s Psychological Society’s Student Research Awards is an annual event to commemorate the excellence of students’ psychological research. Every year, students across tertiary institutions are encouraged to participate and share about their research findings. Since its inception in 2004, the Student Research Awards have been acknowledging and celebrating psychological research conducted here in Singapore, and of relevance to the Singaporean community. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the awards ceremony was held online this 2021 in order to ensure safe measures for everyone.

This E-Booklet is a consolidation of participants’ research findings, and seeks to review the event’s highlights. There is an overall of 7 main awards—Diploma Category Overall Winner, Undergraduate Category Overall Winner, Postgraduate Category Overall Winner, Best Individual Submission, Best Group Submission, the Fred Long Award, and the Audience Choice Award.

The prestigious Fred Long Award for Research Excellence honours the decades of service to our Singapore community by our Founder President and Honorary Fellow of the Singapore Psychological Society. A Clinical Psychologist by training, Mr Fred Long served 34 years at the Woodbridge Hospital & Institute of Mental Health and headed the Government Psychological Service from 1984 until his retirement from Civil Service. For his dedication to the Singapore Public Service, he was conferred the Public Administration Medal (Bronze) in 1985 and Public Administration Medal (Silver) in 200.

We sincerely thank all participants, finalists, winners, judges, special guests and volunteers for taking part in SRA 2021 by dedicating your time and effort in making this event possible. Stay safe and we look forward to seeing you again next year in 2022!

Cheers,
2021 Planning Team
The Influence of Individual Difference Factors on One’s Decision in Choosing a Path in Tertiary Education

I was interested to examine the influence of individual difference factors on tertiary education choice so that we can better address these factors when coming up with interventions to facilitate students’ decision-making process. This is important as tertiary education provides individuals with meaningful knowledge and expertise when entering the workforce, and identifying the different driving factors can assist students in making better and more informed decisions. Hence, my study aimed to explore the plausible influence of the key factors of the social cognitive career theory and personality on tertiary education decision-making through a focus on the development of vocational interests, exploration and planning. From my review, I discovered that developing students’ self-efficacy, helping to foster positive expectations about pursuing careers, and encouraging students to create goals that are relevant to skill development or performance, can help to boost their interests in specific career fields, and thereafter assist them in making more mindful choices for tertiary education. It is also beneficial to consider how personality differences can impact students’ decision-making, so we can tap on their differing career-related interests to guide them better in selecting tertiary education pathways. Future implementations addressing the individual difference factors can be integrated into career guidance platforms to provide an additional personality-based career guidance approach.

Examining the Social Factors Influencing One’s Decision in Choosing a Path for Tertiary Education

Literature has predominantly focused on studying decision-making from a purely intrinsic vantage point, so I wanted to draw my attention towards how societal influences can have the same effects on an individual. Furthermore, higher qualifications and its routes have major impacts on life to come for individuals since it is the last stage of schooling. Hence, there is a need to examine how students are making this monumental life decision. Looking from three perspectives, influence from the community posits that gender stereotypes are prevalent in perpetuating gender norms which segregate people into different jobs, therefore motivating one to choose a certain path in tertiary education. Bringing it closer to home, the nature and nurture standpoint tells us that it is important to not let genes dictate how we view ourselves and our capabilities and a good home environment is still crucial in order to let one’s best self shine. Finally, both intrinsic and extrinsic factors of the self do attract people to its respective pathways. These include the need for self-actualisation and innate motivation plus how they influence personality for intrinsic and financial and social incentives for extrinsic. To put this into a practical perspective, schools should involve parents to initiate conversations with their children or even be moral supporters, plus encourage a gender neutral environment to not perpetuate gender norms.
DIPLOMA FINALISTS

AMELIA KOH

EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS’ MOTIVATION WITH VOCATIONAL IDENTITY AND CAREER DECISION-MAKING

We were interested to find out how intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors affected vocational identity and behaviour. This is crucial as understanding and working towards one’s vocational identity and behaviour is important as it helps one be more certain in preparing themselves for a VUCA future. However, the current career programmes are being underutilised and this may cause one to be more confused and not be ready upon entering the workforce. Hence with our study, we aimed to discover what motivates students to proactively work towards career planning. From our results, we discovered that intrinsic motivation, specifically career decision-making self-efficacy, was the most correlated and predictive of vocational identity and behaviour. Surprisingly, more parental pressure and expectations produced lower vocational identity and behaviour, which was suggested by prior literature that the role parents play can be positive or negative depending on the type and amount of pressure that they exert. With these findings, for future policies and programmes, education and career guidance departments should focus on developing students' self-efficacy in schools and work closely with parents to manage parental pressure and expectations for more positive outcomes in vocational identity and behaviour.

SHARMAIN CHIA

DEVI D/O CHANDRAN

EXPLORING SOCIAL INTERACTIONS AMONG YOUTHS IN SINGAPORE’S URBAN SPACES AND ONLINE PLATFORMS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

This is an exploratory study that investigated several relationships between youth social interactions. Singapore’s urban spaces, and online platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic via a mix of naturalistic observations, surveys and interviews. Specifically, how affordances in urban spaces affect youth social interactions. The researchers found a myriad of findings but some notable ones include youths’ preference for interest based amenities, archaic nature of the place influences youths’ environmental values and knowledge about socialising there and having an interest-based activity facilitates stranger interaction. Findings were used to provide suggestions of physical features that can better facilitate social interactions among different groups of youths in Singapore.

SHERLYN LEE

& RANDALL THAM.

PERLENE LIAU

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Singapore Psychological Society
(Established 1979)
Multiculturalism Centrality Moderates the Effect of Distinctiveness Threat on Outgroup Prejudice

Distinctiveness threat occurs when the ingroup and outgroup are perceived to be insufficiently differentiated, which may prompt increased outgroup prejudice. This research examined the role of the centrality of multiculturalism as a value in individuals’ responses towards distinctiveness threat. Values that are central to the ingroup affirm the ingroup identity and guide aligned action. Drawing from self-affirmation theory, when multiculturalism is perceived as a central value to the ingroup, upholding multiculturalism could restore ingroup distinctiveness. Furthermore, multiculturalism as a value encourages acceptance of outgroups. Thus, we expected that at high multiculturalism centrality to the ingroup, distinctiveness threat would lead to decreased (instead of increased) outgroup prejudice. Findings showed that in Singaporean undergraduates, multiculturalism centrality moderated the effect of distinctiveness threat on outgroup prejudice, supporting our prediction. At high multiculturalism centrality, high (vs low) distinctiveness threat resulted in lower envious prejudice towards international students. Our results suggest that the value of multiculturalism is useful in improving intergroup relations.

A daily within-person investigation on the link between social expectancies to be busy and emotional wellbeing among Singaporeans: The moderating role of emotional complexity acceptance

With postmodern societies like Singapore placing high value on productivity, it is increasingly common to extol busy individuals as more competent and achieving. In this context, although feeling a social expectation to be busy might imply that individuals are viewed by others to be competent and desirable, its accompanying stressors may also detrimentally impact individuals’ mental health. Utilising data from a seven-day diary study, we found that feeling a social pressure to feel busy is generally related to poorer daily emotional wellbeing. However, trait emotional complexity acceptance (being comfortable with feeling mixed emotions) can buffer against these effects. This work finds that being accepting of feeling both positive emotions (e.g., feeling accomplished) and negative emotions (e.g., feeling tired or stressed) can protect one’s emotional well-being. Additionally, this research highlights the importance of cultivating healthy cultures in places like workplaces and schools, as these cultures can have a direct effect on one’s well-being.
The Effects of COVID-19 on Male Undergraduate Students’ Career Adaptability and Anxiety

Undergraduate students experience higher anxiety levels during the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, undergraduates are at the pivotal school-to-work transition stage which could contribute to their anxiety. Career adaptability is critical in helping students manage this transition, and as such, could be a protective factor against anxiety problems. This study investigated the role of career adaptability in the association between COVID-19 stressors and anxiety symptoms in undergraduates. Using a sample of 2,339 undergraduates, this study found that higher levels of COVID-19 stressors and lower levels of career adaptability predicted anxiety symptoms in undergraduates. Path analyses showed that career adaptability mediated the relationship between COVID-19 stressors and anxiety symptoms, only for males. This result suggests that higher levels of COVID-19 stressors tend to reduce male undergraduates’ career adaptability which, in turn, increases their risk of anxiety symptoms. Hence, increasing career adaptability could be useful in alleviating anxiety symptoms associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, especially for male undergraduates.

A Meta-Analytic Review of the Relationship Between Social Media and Well-Being: A Fresh Perspective in the Context of COVID-19

The current literature on the relationship between social media and mental health has provided mixed and inconclusive findings which continue to extend into the pandemic. The effects of social media on well-being remains a polarising issue even in the new norms of social isolation and a higher reliance of social media as a coping mechanism.

In light of these inconclusive findings, the aim of our meta-analysis was to synthesise previous research data in order to have a holistic understanding of the association between social media and well-being, particularly in the context of COVID-19.

The current meta-analysis systematically investigated 47 records published during COVID-19 and examined the potential moderators in the relationship between social media and well-being, such as the various operationalizations of social media. Overall, a small negative effect size was found, suggesting that social media usage is weakly associated with a decrease in overall well-being during COVID-19. We discuss the implications of these findings and highlight areas where further research is needed to shed light on the relationship between social media and well-being.
I Think, Therefore I Am? Meta-Perceptions of Racial Group Inferiority and Foreignness Predict Actual Self-Perceptions

Do people's beliefs about whether others see their racial group as subordinate, or meta-perceptions of racial subordination, affect how they see themselves? Using the Racial Position Model (Zou & Cheryan, 2017), we examined in a sample of 202 adult Singaporeans or Singapore Permanent Residents if meta-perceptions of racial groups on two dimensions of subordination—inferiority (vs. superiority) and foreignness (vs. Singaporean-ness)—predicted self-ratings on the same dimensions in a correlational survey. Regression analyses revealed that across racial groups, greater meta-perceptions of inferiority of their own race significantly predicted higher self-ratings of inferiority, but only among minority-race respondents. Meta-perceptions of foreignness of their own race also predicted higher self-ratings of foreignness, but only among majority-race respondents. These findings suggest that beliefs about how others perceive their race as subordinate may be internalised, with nuances according to race. Future experimental work is needed to ascertain their causal relationships, and potentially extend theories related to personal and intergroup identities.

Recovery needs and Psychosocial Rehabilitation Trajectory of Stroke Survivors (PReTS): An overview of systematic reviews

Stroke inflicts multiple non-death losses into the lives of survivors and alters numerous aspects of their lives. This overview of systematic reviews thematically synthesises the experience of loss and recovery following a stroke and develops the Psychosocial Rehabilitation Trajectory of Stroke Survivors (PReTS) model that emphasises the essentiality of addressing psycho-socio-emotional and spiritual needs alongside physical impairments. Biomedical models prioritise the treatment and management of illness or disability in current healthcare ecosystems. The PReTS model highlights the experience of suffering in survivors’ losses, their recovery journeys and most specifically, their psychosocial needs, and serves to inform and advance holistic and wellness recovery research.

Dispositional Optimism and Sleep: A Meta-Analytic Review of the State of the Field

Dispositional optimism has been found to be positively associated with sleep-related outcomes. Though there exists a breadth of studies examining the association, there is no unifying review of empirical works in this area, and many existing empirical works differ substantially in methodological characteristics, which include how sleep and optimism have been operationalised or assessed. Moreover, there is a lack in consensus on the directionality of the optimism-sleep association; some studies propose a bidirectional relationship, while others a unidirectional relationship. Hence, this meta-analysis investigated 13 eligible studies and provided an extensive synthesis of the methodological discrepancies across the eligible studies. Overall, a small to medium positive effect size was found, suggesting that dispositional optimism is associated with better sleep.
SRA 2021 WINNERS

Diploma Category Overall Winner
Amelia Koh, Devi D/O Chandran & Sharmaine Chia with “Examining the Relationship Between Students’ Motivation with Vocational Identity and Career Decision-Making”

Undergraduate Category Overall Winner & Best Group Submission

Postgraduate Category Overall Winner, Best Individual Submission & Fred Long Award Winner
Muhammad Amin Shaik with “Recovery needs and Psychosocial Rehabilitation Trajectory of Stroke Survivors (PReTS): An overview of systematic reviews”

Audience Choice Award
Verity Lua with “A daily within-person investigation on the link between social expectancies to be busy and emotional wellbeing among Singaporeans: The moderating role of emotional complexity acceptance”
WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL PARTICIPANTS, FINALISTS, WINNERS, JUDGES, SPECIAL GUESTS AND VOLUNTEERS ONCE AGAIN FOR MAKING THIS EVENT POSSIBLE. WE HOPE THAT THIS YEAR’S SRA 2021 HAS BEEN A MEANINGFUL ONE FOR YOU, AND WE HOPE TO SEE YOU AGAIN NEXT YEAR!

Signing off,
2021 Planning Team