



Psychology Department

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO
COLORADO SPRINGS

Diversity Committee E-Blast

November 2022

By: Kelly Dixon

This Month's Newsletter At a Glance

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5. **Editorial:** Ageism: Psychology Studies How it Impacts Individuals and Society

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Committee Members

Chairs: Dr. Sara Qualls and Dr. Leilani Feliciano

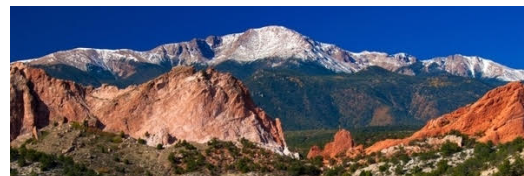
Faculty: Dr. Diana Selmeczy, Dr. Steven Bistricky, Dr. Rachel Weiskittle

Staff: Dr. Magdalene Lim

Graduate Student Members: Kelly Dixon, Marcus Chur

Communications Subcommittee: Kelly Dixon

Education Subcommittee: Marcus Chur, Sophie Brickman, Molly Higgins, Christine Mason



Serve: Student Opportunities

The psychology department diversity committee is continually committed to representing the perspectives, voices, and experiences of those that we serve; in order to do so, we need your help! We are looking for students to serve in the following capacities:

1. Serve as a student member of the Communications Subcommittee! Responsibilities include website content development and maintenance, communication of diversity committee initiatives to the department via quarterly e-blasts, and updating the committee's events page on Mountain Lion Connect. Expected time commitment is 2-3 hours/month. Interested students should contact Diana Selmeczy at Diana.Selmeczy@uccs.edu.
2. Contribute an editorial piece for the quarterly diversity committee e-blast newsletter! The Communications Subcommittee is looking for students interested in writing brief featured pieces related to specialized topics, populations, or perspectives of interest within EDI. Past editorials have included [Intersectional Feminism and Sexual Objectification](#), [Weight Stigma and Implications for Psychological Science, Education, and Practice](#), [Rehumanizing People with Disabilities](#), [A Primer on Pronouns](#), [Considering Cultural Humility: Is "Competence" Enough?](#), [Discrimination Towards Asian Americans During the COVID-19 pandemic](#), and [How to Ask about Gender and Sexuality in Research](#). Students should contact Kelly Dixon at kodonne2@uccs.edu to express interest in serving as a contributing editor and to suggest potential topics.

Upcoming Events



Free Webinar on Demand: Psychiatry and Civil Rights in the American South

The National Institutes of Health is sponsoring the James H. Cassedy Lecture in the History of Medicine: "Jim Crow in the Asylum: Psychiatry and Civil Rights in the American South." The recorded lecture (presented September 15th) is available to watch on-demand [here](#).

Volunteer at Inside Out Youth Services (Tuesday, November 15th):

The MOSAIC center at UCCS is hosting a volunteer opportunity with Inside Out, an organization that provides support to LGBTQIA2+ youth in Colorado Springs. Learn more and register [here](#).

Trans Day of Remembrance (Monday, November 20th)

Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) is an annual observance on November 20 that honors the memory of the transgender people whose lives were lost in acts of anti-transgender violence. Learn more about how to honor trans lives lost [here](#), and visit MOSAIC for additional support and to learn about local events.

Research Spotlight: Esther Chung (M.A. Student, Psychological Science)

The Association Between Emotion Beliefs and Cultural Variables

Esther J. Chung, Michael A. Kiskey
 Department of Psychology, University of Colorado at Colorado Springs

Introduction

- Emotion beliefs are defined as a statement about an emotion that an individual endorses as true, or likely to be true
- Current study was designed to understand the relationship between emotion belief and cultural variables
- **Hypothesis:** We hypothesize that there is a correlation between emotion beliefs and a person's background demographics; more specifically we believe that a person's religion, politics, and birth order will be more strongly related to certain beliefs on emotion.

Methods

- **Participants** (N = 151)
- 18-80 years old
- Residing in America and United States Minor Outlying Islands



- **Procedure:**
- Recruitment through Amazon MTurk, SONA, and flyers located in UCCS MOSAIC
- Online study survey, utilizing Qualtrics



Methods cont.

- Asked questions about their emotion beliefs, multiple scales were used to understand an individual's emotion belief from multiple points of view:
 - *Individual Beliefs about Emotions* (Veilleux et al., 2021): 10-item scale, used to assess perceptions of belief stability
 - *Help and Hinder Scale* (Karnaze and Levine, 2020): designed to assess an individual's belief about the functionality of emotion
 - *Leahy Emotion Scale-II* (Leahy, 2012): based on an emotional schema model targeting emotion and emotion regulation

Results

- Catholics rated emotions as less useful ($F = 4.11, p = 0.018$), less comprehensible ($F = 5.127, p = 0.007$), and longer lasting ($F = 4.61, p = 0.011$) than protestants and non-religious individuals.
- Those higher on conservatism (compared to liberalism) rated emotions as less complex ($r = -0.17, p = 0.042$), tend to prefer logic over emotions ($r = -0.17, p = 0.033$), and believe to act less emotionally ($r = -0.20, p = 0.014$).
- Those who are the eldest child in their family ($F = 4.52, p = 0.012$) and those with more family support ($r = .192, p = 0.018$) view their own emotions to be like others.
- Those with more perceived family support view negative emotions as less shameful ($r = -0.27, p = 0.001$) and felt less emotionally numb ($r = -0.17, p = 0.040$)

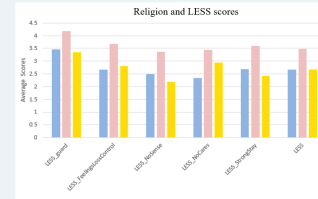


Figure 1: Items are ranked on a 6-point Likert scale, with 1 being coded as "very untrue of me" and 6 is coded as "very true of me". The LESS items above asked the following question: LESS - useful, you have no good options for trying certain feelings; LESS - comprehensible, it's not clear how some of these feelings; LESS - longer lasting, I don't feel like certain feelings; LESS - complex, my feelings don't make sense to me; LESS - prefer logic, no one really cares about my feelings; LESS - Strongly, I sometimes fear that if I showed myself to have a certain feeling, it would ruin my life.

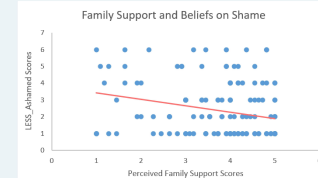


Figure 2: Items are ranked on a 6-point Likert scale, with 1 being coded as "very untrue of me" and 6 is coded as "very true of me". The LESS items above asked the following question: LESS - ashamed, I feel ashamed of my feelings.

Discussion

- Collectively, these results are consistent with the idea that the experiences people accumulate during their life through culture affect emotional beliefs.
- **Limitation:**
- Participants consisted of those only from the United States
- Only specific cultural variables were studied not broad concepts of culture
- Some questions were originally tailored for college students and then run again on adults, whom it was not clear if they were currently in college.

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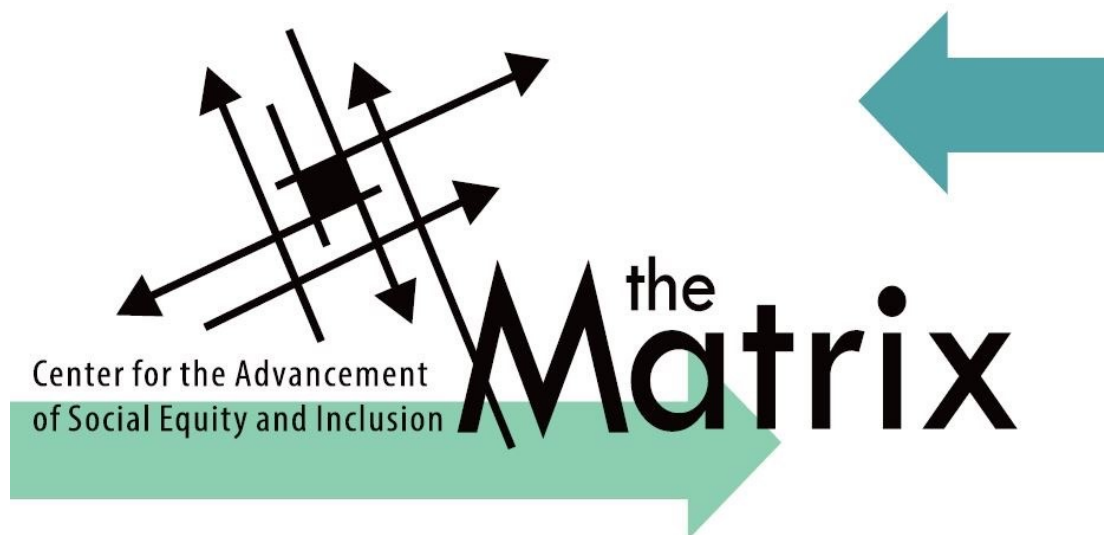
Esther's thesis research was initiated in January 2022 and focuses on cultural differences related to emotion beliefs and identity. Pilot data involving culture related to religion, political alignment, and birth order was presented as a poster at the annual meeting for the International Society for Research on Emotion. Currently, Esther's thesis project has expanded upon these findings to research culture as it concerns individual versus collectivist societies. Esther shares "*Humans have a tendency to hold a wide variety of beliefs about the properties of emotions. There has been a plethora of literature on cultural differences in emotional experience, expression, and many other variables. Yet, despite this, there is relatively little research focusing on the cultural differences in emotion beliefs. For my thesis study, I hope to study this and understand the differences in*

emotion beliefs between two separate cultures as well as the contrast within an individual's multicultural identity."

We encourage students to continue engaging in research initiatives that incorporate EDI, and to share ideas and best practices! These may include conducting studies within marginalized populations, examining cross-cultural differences, or developing or implementing culturally-specific measurement in methodology. If you are conducting culturally-sensitive research and would like to be featured on our website, please contact kodonne2@uccs.edu.

Engage

Graduate Certificate for Diversity, Social Justice and Inclusion



The Matrix Center's at UCCS's certificate was one of the first nationally accredited, university-backed programs for those seeking the advanced skills, knowledge and strategies to implement diversity-oriented pedagogy, programs, practices and policies that can be applied in educational, community, non-profit, corporate and public settings. The program provides an unprecedented level of expertise from leading scholars and nationally renowned experts and partner organizations. Courses are offered online, and are self-paced. Apply for the Graduate Certificate for Diversity, Social Justice and Inclusion [here](#).

APA Racial Equity Action Plan: Feedback Survey



AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

In October 2021 APA's Council of Representatives [adopted a resolution apologizing to people of color](#) for APA's role in promoting, perpetuating, and failing to challenge racism, racial discrimination and human hierarchy. APA's recently approved [Racial Equity Action Plan](#) outlines the broad areas in which APA will take action to operationalize the commitments made in the apology. APA is inviting feedback on the priorities set forth in this action plan; please take [this brief 10-minute survey](#) by November 8th to provide commentary.

Ageism: Psychology Studies How it Impacts Individuals and Society

By: Dr. Sara Qualls, Professor of Psychology

Despite the association of aging with wisdom in some idealized cultural expectations, research has documented pervasive ageism in our culture. Historical analyses of language in literature document the shift from positive to negative views of aging that occurred between 1810 and 2009 (Ng, Allore, Tretalange, Monin, & Levy, 2015). Ageism is made up of negative attitudes and stereotypes toward older adults that have widespread deleterious effects. The original definition of ageism was provided by Robert Butler, the founding Director of the National Institute on Aging, in 1969 as “the systematic stereotyping of and discrimination against people because they are old, just as racism and sexism accomplish this with skin color and gender” (1969, p. 243). Note that this definition incorporates discriminatory behavior as well as negative attitudes and stereotypes.

The effects of attitudes and stereotypes about aging on the well-being of older adults is well established. Age stereotypes focus on characteristics ascribed to older adults as a group (Levy, 2009). Although multiple stereotype categories exist in younger adults' cognitive representations of older adults, negative age stereotypes outnumber positive ones and are more negative than stereotypes of other age groups (Kite, Stockdale, Whitley, & Johnson, 2005) across the globe (Chang, Kanno, Levy, Want, Lee, et al., 2020). The effects of stereotypes held by older adults on their own behavior and well-being has been the focus of Stereotype Embodiment Theory, developed by Becca Levy and colleagues, that now guides much of that research. The theory postulates that stereotypes negatively impact the health and well-being of older adults through a top-down process of assimilation from the culture in ways that influence the individual, and a developmental process by which assimilation occurs across a life span (Levy, 2009). Experimental research has demonstrated a wide range of effects of priming negative or positive stereotypes, including walking speed and balance (Hausdorff, Levy, & Wei (1999) and fine motor skills (Levy, 2000) as well as more pervasive effects on functional health over an 18 month period (Levy, Slade, & Kasl, 2002) and cumulative effects on health across the lifespan (Levy, Zonderman, Slade, & Ferrucci, 2009). Similar effects of primed stereotypes have been demonstrated in experiments on memory (e.g., Levy 1996) and other aspects of cognitive functioning that meta-analyses show have a strong effect size (Horton, Baker, Pearce, & Deakin, 2008) and longitudinal studies show have impact across almost 40 years of adulthood (Levy, Zonderman, Slade, & Ferrucci (2012). Finally,

negative age stereotypes have similar effects on mental health (e.g., suicidal ideation, anxiety, and post traumatic stress disorder; Levy, Pilver & Pietrzak, 2014). Surrounding these effects are many contextual factors that impact the intensity of one's views of aging, including culture (e.g., Hess et al., 2017). Of course, ageism intersects with negative effects of other factors that produce social marginalization and institutional discrimination in ways that are often referred to as a double jeopardy of being old and _____ (fill in the blank).

Psychologists have documented the effects of ageism in society. Workplace discrimination based on age is a common experience (Perron, 2018) with negative consequences in multiple areas of employment such as job interviews and training (Abrams, Swift & Drury, 2016) even in countries such as Japan where aging is supposedly revered (Harada, Sugisawa, Sugihara, Yanagisawa, & Shimerl, 2019). The criminal justice system witnesses ageism in the victimization of older adults in elder abuse and financial exploitation (Phelan & Ayalon, 2020; Lichtenberg, 2016), and in legal proceedings where their testimony is taken less seriously (Pittman, Toglia, Leone, Mueller-Johnson, 2014). Even the widespread visibility of negative views of older adults in mass media (e.g., birthday cards, news features on the "silver tsunami") suggests that social norms allow ageist portrayals to be promoted.

What can we do?

The American Psychological Association's Ageism [resolution](#) provides a model of a policy statement that is tied to action plans. Passed in 2020 by the Council of Representatives, this resolution lays out the argument for data that document ageism and its effects on individuals and society in considerable detail, and then notes actions that the APA commits to doing as a professional organization. Many of those actions can and must be done at the individual level. Examples include committing to combating ageist language and/or images, and promoting education of colleagues about research and interventions to combat ageism. Institutions can also commit to examining their own practices and policies to ensure that older members are treated fairly. Psychology departments are encouraged to ensure that all levels of education and training includes content about aging that is balanced and addresses intersectionality of age with other social structures. Psychologists generally are encouraged to build competencies to address aging and ageism, contribute to a public narrative about heterogeneity of aging and positive benefits of longevity, and collaborate with other disciplines to address ageism, among other possible actions.

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