



MONMOUTH  
UNIVERSITY

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PSYCHOLOGY

*78<sup>th</sup> Semi-Annual*

*Undergraduate Student Conference*

*April 21, 2024*

*8:15am-1:00pm*

*Great Hall*

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# Schedule at a Glance

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8:15 AM – 9:00 AM  
*Versailles and Pompeii Rooms*

**Breakfast**

9:00 AM – 9:05 AM  
*Great Hall Auditorium*

**Welcome Remarks**

Dr. Gina Vella, MU '11, Chief Psychologist at Jersey Shore University Medical Center introduced by Dr. Christine Hatchard, MU '00, Chair of the Department of Psychology

9:05 AM – 10:00 AM  
*Great Hall Auditorium*

**Paper Session I**

10:00 AM – 10:15 AM

**Break**

10:15 AM – 11:15 AM  
*Great Hall Auditorium*

**Paper Session II**

11:15 AM – 11:45 AM  
*Versailles and Pompeii Rooms*

**Poster Session**

11:45 AM – 12:45 PM  
*Great Hall Auditorium*

**Paper Session III**

12:45 PM – 1:00 PM  
*Great Hall Auditorium*

**Closing Remarks and Student Awards**

Dr. Lisa Dinella, Professor of Psychology and Chair of the Student Awards Committee

## Paper Session I

Great Hall Auditorium 9:05 AM – 10:00 AM

Moderator: Joseph G. Myers, President of Psi Chi

Julianna Caccamo

Differences Between Individual and Team Sport College Athletes

This study evaluated the differences between individual sport athletes and team sport athletes on their levels of sport-confidence and generalized self-efficacy. The hypothesis for the study was that individual sport athletes will have higher levels of sport-confidence and generalized self-efficacy than team sport athletes. The study included 44 Monmouth student-athletes between the ages of 18-24. Participants completed a sports-confidence questionnaire, a generalized self-efficacy questionnaire, and a demographics questionnaire. A t-test for independent means was conducted to evaluate the data.

Analysis revealed, contrary to the hypotheses, there was no difference in level of sport-confidence and generalized self-efficacy. The difference in mean scores between individual and team sport athletes were also not significant. The results of this study imply that difference in sport type is not a determining factor on an athlete's level of overall sport-confidence or self-efficacy. Implications of this study are gaining knowledge about college athletes' psyche to implement techniques aimed at enhancing athletic performance level.

Mentor: Dr. Ciarocco

McKenzie Tonkery

Is one better than the other? Appearance Preferences in Designer Breeds and Shelter Dogs

This study looked at appearance preferences amongst breeder and shelter dogs. 106 participants volunteered using an online participant pool to participate in the study. They received SONA credits for their psychology classes. It was hypothesized that those that read the breeder prompt would be more likely to choose dogs assumed to be from a breeder, and those that read the shelter prompt would be more likely to choose dogs assumed to be from a shelter. Participants randomly received a prompt from one of two conditions (breeder or shelter), an adoptability scale derived from (Gunter et al., 2016), a demographics questionnaire, and the manipulation check that were all used to assess appearance preferences on adoptability. Using an independent-samples proportions researchers found that appearance preferences had no significant effect on adoptability. However, due to some limitations based on the study itself, the topic at hand, the lack of research, and possibly the population, could have greatly affected the study otherwise.

Mentor: Dr. Mehrkam

Naomi Louis

Children's Literature's Effect on Gender Stereotypes

This study explored how exposure to children's literature can affect an individual's belief in gender stereotypes. A sample of 56 college students were assigned to one of two conditions: a group that read five children's books with boys as lead characters (boy-led books) or a group that read five children's books with girls as lead characters (girl-led books). They then completed questionnaires measuring belief in gender stereotypes on occupations, activities, and traits. As hypothesized, participants who read girl-led books reported a lower belief in gender stereotypes about occupations and activities than those who read boy-led books. However, participants had equal scores on gender stereotype beliefs about traits. These findings suggest that exposure to children's literature may affect beliefs in certain types of gender stereotypes.

Mentor: Dr. Dinella

Rebecca Sierra

#### Impact of Extroversion on an Individual's Emotion Regulation and Empathy Levels

This study examined the potential relationship extroversion had on emotion regulation and empathy. It was hypothesized that extroversion would be positively correlated to both emotion regulation and empathy. A sample of 96 undergraduate students at Monmouth University participated in a correlational survey study. Participants took an online survey that consisted of questions pertaining to personality traits, emotion towards others as well as themselves, and how they deal with their emotions. Materials used for this study included the Perth Emotion Regulation Competency Inventory (Preece et al., 2018), Perth Empathy Scale (Bret et al., 2023), Eysenck's Personal Inventory (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1993), and a demographics questionnaire. Extroversion had no correlation with either emotion regulation nor empathy. The results suggest that personality traits such as extroversion do not play a factor in an individual's emotion regulation and empathy/ Future research should broaden their participant pool and add another variable that might have a factor in an individual's emotion regulation and empathy.

Mentor: Dr. Ciarocco

Sara Floyd

#### Perceptions of the Pup: The Effect of Breed Perception on Dog Adoption Likelihood

This study examines the relationship between dog breed perception on dog adoption likelihood. Seventy-three college students participated in the study assessing if people prefer to adopt a certain breed of dog based on preconceived perceptions and personal experiences with said dog breeds. To measure dog breed perception on dog adoption likelihood, participants were asked to complete two questionnaires regarding perceptions of pit bull type dogs and Labrador Retrievers, view an adoption page of either a pit bull type dog or a Labrador Retriever, and answer a dog adoption likelihood questionnaire. The following study was a between-subjects design with the independent variable being dog breed perception and the dependent variable being dog adoption likelihood. Participants also provided demographic information regarding their gender, age, and ethnicity. Overall, there were significant differences between dog breed perception and dog adoption likelihood. Although people may have positive perceptions of pit bull type dogs, they are still stigmatized in a way that causes them to go last in adoption preference to stereotypically non-aggressive dog breeds.

Mentor: Dr. Mehrkam

Jorell Gregg

#### The Importance of Media: How Viewer Gender and Character Gender Affect Opinions of Television Characters

Gender informs the beliefs and opinions that we have towards individuals of different social groups, and this can affect their social outcomes. The goal of the present study is to analyze how the gender of a fictional character on television (man/woman), the type of behavior they exhibit (agentic/communal/), and the gender of the viewer affects how much the character is liked. The current study included 70 undergraduate college students. Contrary to hypotheses, participants liked characters exhibiting communal behavior more than agentic behavior, regardless of the character's gender. Furthermore, there was no significant interaction of participant gender, behavior type, or character gender. These findings provide new insights as to the social expectations of men and women in media.

Mentor: Dr. Dinella

Jaclyn Ahrens

#### Impact of Academic Comparison on Students' Procrastination and Self-Handicapping Behavior

The present study investigated the connection between academic comparison and academic procrastination and academic self-handicapping (i.e., creating an excuse and blaming the excuse as the reason for an unfavorable grade instead of person taking responsibility) behavior. It was predicted that students who academically compare themselves more would procrastinate more. Also, it was predicted that students who academically compare themselves more would self-handicap more. Participants included undergraduate college students at a private university in New Jersey and a majority of them

were White, first year students who identified as female. All 105 participants completed a packet containing an academic comparison survey, an academic procrastination survey, a self-handicapping survey, and a demographics questionnaire. A Pearson  $r$  correlation revealed no relationship between academic comparison and academic procrastination. However, there was a positive but weak correlation between academic comparison and academic self-handicapping. This indicates that there is some kind of relationship between academic comparison to academic self-handicapping, but no relationship to academic procrastination. This finding from the present study implies that students who academically compare themselves are more likely to find an excuse to blame for their unfavorable grade rather than take personal responsibility. Understanding these results can allow students to recognize their behaviors that are withholding them from reaching their fullest academic potential and help them change their habits.

Mentor: Dr. Ciarocco

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## Paper Session II

Great Hall Auditorium 10:15 AM – 11:15 AM

Moderator: Joseph G. Myers, President of Psi Chi

Caitlin H. Egan & Lauren Pantelone

Interning in Psychology: Abilities in Action and Monmouth University Polling Institute

Caitlin Egan will share information about her internship at the Monmouth University Polling Institute. She served as an assistant to the Project Coordinator to support the institute in releasing clear and transparent polls. Additionally, she worked to update information regarding states legislation, primaries and elections, along with interpreting survey results and media outlook.

Lauren Pantelone will discuss her internship at Abilities in Action, which is a pediatric therapy center that provides physical, occupational, and speech therapy services to children of all abilities.

Mentor: Dr. Dinella

Anna Andreula

The Influence of Service Dogs and Its Utilization to Treat Mental Health Disorders

This study evaluates the impact that virtual service dogs may have on United States (U.S.) Military veterans' willingness to obtain a service dog as a means of mental health treatment. Furthermore, researchers wanted to specifically examine whether the type of task a service dog performs has an impact on one's willingness to obtain a service dog to include whether the presence of symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can also have an underlying impact on the decision to ultimately own a service dog as a more holistic approach for mental health treatment. Fifty-three U.S. Military Veterans participated in the study to determine whether they displayed symptoms that meet the criteria for PTSD utilizing the PCLM-5 PTSD Checklist (Department of Veteran Affairs, 2024). Participants were exposed to one out of two conditions of the independent variable (type of task performed by a service dog) in order to determine if this also influenced their willingness to obtain a service dog. To measure the influence of the service dogs' task and the correlation between the participants' willingness to obtain a service dog, participants were asked to rate their mood a first time, review a video of a virtual canine service dog performing a task (functional or emotionally comforting), and rate their mood a second time. They were then asked to respond whether they would want to obtain a service dog as an alternative method for mental health treatment. The following study was within-subject's design using a t-test for dependent samples to assess pre and post mood for each participant after reviewing one of the two levels. The dependent variable consisted of a participants' willingness to obtain a service dog and their mood (pre and post mood scale test scores). Participants also provided demographic information regarding their gender, age, ethnicity, characterization of discharge and whether they served in a combat zone or not. Results revealed that participants' moods improved after viewing a service dog

performing a task, however, there was no significant difference in the type of task the service dog performed that influenced a participants' willingness to obtain one. The study revealed that service dogs can have a positive influence in veterans' willingness to obtain one as an alternative approach to treating mental health disorders.

Mentor: Dr. Mehrkam

Connor Currie

Mirror, Mirror on the Wall, the Person I See is not Me At All

This study evaluated how self-esteem and image orientation (mirrored and regular) affect self-perceived attractiveness. Research indicates that people prefer their mirrored image, or what they see in the mirror, more than their regular image, or what they see when their picture is taken (Mita et al., 1967). Additionally, self-esteem positively correlates with self-perceived attractiveness (Bale & Archer, 2013). Participants of the study indicated their level of self-esteem, which split them into having either high or low self-esteem, and then randomly viewed their mirrored image or regular image on a smartphone. They then indicated their self-perceived attractiveness level. It was hypothesized that people would find their mirrored image more attractive than their regular image. Also, people with high self-esteem would rate themselves more attractive than those with low self-esteem. Lastly, people with high self-esteem would rate their mirrored image as more attractive than their regular image, and conversely, people with low self-esteem would rate their regular image as more attractive than their mirrored image. The only significant finding in the study was that participants with high levels of self-esteem rated themselves as more attractive than those with low levels of self-esteem. This study showcases the importance of self-esteem, and how it is possible that self-esteem levels are more impactful than how a person sees themselves physically, whether it be in a mirror or picture, in determining how attractive they are.

Mentor: Dr Ciarocco

Sharina Read

Attitudes About Seeking Professional Mental Health Services

This study examines how racial and gender identity impact attitudes when seeking out mental health services and if these identities create barriers to seeking mental health services. A sample of 120 (18 men, 103 women) college students completed one survey and one open-ended questionnaire about their attitudes towards mental health services. Gender significantly affected participants' attitudes when seeking mental health services ( $F(1,108) = 6.528, p = .012, \eta^2 = .057$ ), suggesting that women had more positive attitudes. A thematic analysis found that race and gender are barriers when seeking out mental health services. Race and the interaction of race and gender had no significant effect on attitudes. Future studies should have a bigger and more diverse sample.

Mentor: Dr. Dinella

Colleen Cronin

The Impact of Canine Presence on Symptoms of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder in Humans

The present study explored the relationship between Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD), perfectionism, and canine assisted therapy treatment options. Fifty participants were asked to complete an OCD scale and perform a counting task in the presence of a dog or not in the presence of a dog. Chi-square and independent sample t-tests revealed that individuals who reported higher OCD attitudes engaged in perfectionism behavior more than those who scored low. However, individuals in the presence of a dog did not score lower than and did not engage in perfectionism behavior less than individuals not in the presence of a dog. The present study confirmed reliable measures for comparing perfectionism behaviors to feelings of OCD while also creating a starting point for scientific evaluations of potential animal-assisted interventions for OCD.

Mentor: Dr. Mehrkam

Kayla Richardson

Do I Want a Sibling: Does Sibling Status Impact emotional regulation and leadership skills

This study examined the influence of sibling status [NCI] on leadership skills and emotional regulation. Sibling status was defined as only children or children with siblings. The study included 114 participants with 30 only children and 84 children with siblings. Participants completed a leadership skills questionnaire, emotional regulation questionnaire and a demographics questionnaire online via Qualtrics. A series of *t*-tests for independent means were conducted to analyze the variables. There were no significant differences between the two sibling groups on emotional regulation or leadership skills. Only children and children with siblings did not differ in emotional regulation or leadership abilities. This study suggests that only having one child or multiple children may not impact adulthood abilities.

Mentor: Dr. Ciarocco

Emily Trilla

Emotionally Unavailable Caretakers: A Barrier to Comprehensive Sex Education and Emotional Intelligence Development

This study investigates the connection between childhood experiences with emotionally unavailable caregivers and the quality of sexual education provided. Additionally, it explores how this correlation relates to the development of emotional intelligence. With a sample of a hundred and twenty undergraduate participants, an online survey was conducted using three comprehensive questionnaires. These assessed participants' perceptions of sexual knowledge from their primary caregiver, the emotional availability of the caregiver, and their own emotional intelligence. Utilizing multiple linear regressions, the study examines whether sexual education mediates the relationship between caregivers' emotional availability and individuals' emotional intelligence. The findings support the hypothesis that sexual education acts as a mediator between the emotional availability of caregivers and the emotional intelligence of individuals.

Mentor: Dr. Dinella

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## Poster Session

Versailles and Pompeii Rooms 11:15 AM – 11:45 AM

Izabel Cartagena

Hopewell Valley Elementary School

Interned as an assistant to the School Psychologist

Mentor: Dr. Dinella

Olivia Cleaves

Positive Behavior Support, LLC

Interned as a behavior technician assisting an adult client, supported by a Board Certified Behavior Analyst

Mentor: Dr. Dinella

Emilie Fernandez

Turner Syndrome Foundation

Interned as a public health research assistant helping women with Turner Syndrome find specialized medical care

Mentor: Dr. Dinella

Anna Gaglianone

Worrywell Collective

Interned as an assistant to a neurofeedback and psychometrician who conducted neuropsychological assessments for children and adults

Mentor: Dr. Dinella

Nico Grilli

The Shore Athletic Club

Interned as a coach for their youth program and helped the president and vice president recruit businesses to sponsor for events

Mentor: Dr. Dinella

Brenaye Jones

Coastal Communities Family Success Center

Interned as a psych student, under the Director of the Organization that improves the quality of life for the families in the community. Worked closely with the director and other staff members to gain knowledge on the efforts and services the organization provides for the community.

Mentor: Dr. Dinella

Alyssa M. Korch

Lisa Harmon Mollicone LLC

Interning for counselor Lisa Harmon Mollicone provided a unique experience where I received hands-on therapy training. This training extended from biopsychosocial assessments— all the way to personally meeting clientele.

Mentor: Dr. Dinella

Samantha Lanzetta

Abilities in Action

Interned as an observer/ assistant to occupational therapists, physical therapists, and speech language therapists who support therapeutic therapy.

Mentor: Dr. Dinella

Olivia Puzio

Conover Road Elementary and Primary Schools

Interned with a school psychologist who supports elementary and primary school students, who need additional support to be successful academically.

Mentor: Dr. Dinella

Amber West

Meadowbrook School

Interned with the School Counselor that assists elementary school students.

Mentor: Dr. Dinella

Anna Kaitlyn Alomia

The Effects of Pets on University Students' Mental Health and Stress

This study examined the relationship between university students' mental health, stress, and pet ownership. Ninety-eight Monmouth University students filled out the Westside Test Anxiety Scale that measured the anxiety and stress that a typical university student would experience. In addition, the students filled out a demographics questionnaire with one of the questions asking if they were a pet owner or not. This was done to determine whether pet owners that are currently in university experience more or less stress than non-pet owners. It was revealed that there was no significant correlation between stress and pet ownership in university students. Previous research found similar



findings such as pets reducing stress/anxiety in university students, and more scales were used to measure the relationship between variables.

Mentor: Dr. Mehrkam

Kayla D'Alessio

Exploring Self-esteem and Emotional Responses to Social Media Feedback

This study examined how viewing an Instagram post featuring either positive or negative comments influences participants' self-esteem and emotional response. A positive or negative social media post was viewed by participants at random in this two group between-subjects experiment. Participants were randomly assigned to view an Instagram post with a neutral nature picture that contained positive comments or an Instagram post with the same neutral nature picture that contained negative comments. The results indicated that there was no significant difference between the group exposed to positive comments and the group exposed to negative comments in terms of self-esteem levels or emotional responses. This suggests that the type of comment individuals are exposed to may not have an impact on their self-esteem and emotional responses. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of social media interactions, self-esteem, and emotional well-being, highlighting the importance of needing a supportive online environment in promoting positive psychological outcomes, while also advancing our understanding of the factors influencing emotional health and self-worth

Mentor: Dr. Ciarocco

Lauren Carty

Thoughts about Barbie

This study evaluated whether Barbie doll's body size and how they are posed impacts women's body image and self-esteem. Sixty-one undergraduate women were randomly assigned to one of four groups. The first group of women viewed images of Barbies that were thin and actively posed. The second group viewed images of dolls that were thin and passively posed. The third group viewed dolls that had average-body sizes and were actively posed. The fourth group viewed images of dolls that had average body sizes and were passively posed. Participants viewed the images for 15 seconds each. The participants were asked a series of questions in a pre-test and post-test about their current body image and feelings of self-esteem. The results showed no significant differences between pose and size for body image. The body image condition was significant, meaning that body image scores increased when viewing images of any Barbie no matter the size or pose. There were no significant differences found for self-esteem.

Mentor: Dr. Dinella

Harris Khan

The Effects of Preference in Enrichment Interventions in Senior Dogs

This study investigate the role of preference in determining engagement with enrichment devices among senior dogs. Four pet dogs (2 senior and 2 control adult dogs) participated in the study, each undergoing a paired stimulus preference assessment to identify their most and least preferred foods. Subsequently, dogs were introduced to two enrichment devices, the Kong Wobbler and the Snuffle Mat, presenting a challenge in accessing food. Behavioral observations were conducted to measure engagement time with each device and food preference. Results indicate that all dogs spent significantly more time attempting to access their most preferred food from both the Kong Wobbler and the Snuffle Mat. While three dogs demonstrated greater engagement with the Snuffle Mat, one dog exhibited a preference for the Kong Wobbler. These findings highlight the importance of tailoring enrichment interventions to individual preferences, with implications for promoting engagement and well-being in senior dogs.

Mentor: Dr. Mehrkam

Alexis Foster  
Profiles of Influence

The overall purpose of the present study was to determine if there were relations between the number of social media accounts an individual has and the Instagram intensity usage on the perceived social desirability (when people attempt to portray a positive image of themselves rather than accurate information about themselves). The study consisted of 100 participants who were undergraduates from Monmouth University. Utilizing a correlational design, an online survey and Pearson r correlation coefficients were helpful in determining what occurred. The results indicated significant relations, but opposite of original predictions. The higher number of social media accounts one has, the lower their social desirability. Additionally, the higher intensity usage of Instagram an individual has, the lower their social desirability. The less people care about their impressions on social media, the more social media accounts they have and the more they use Instagram.

Mentor: Dr. Ciarocco

Sophia Centrella  
"Who's My Doctor?"

This study evaluates patients' preferences when choosing a provider for pain management, specifically the impact of patient-provider gender concordance in the healthcare system. One hundred and twenty college students participated in the study assessing if patients prefer a provider of the same or different gender than their own when seeking out treatment for pain management. To measure the influence of provider gender, participants were asked to read four biographies of providers (two men, two women with similar credentials) and then rate their comfort with the providers. Participants also provided demographic information regarding their gender, age, ethnicity and current standing. Overall, there was no difference in gender preferences of men and women participants regarding their likelihood to choose a provider for pain management.

Mentor: Dr. Dinella

Alexandria Micco

The Association among Health Conditions, Illness Acceptance, and Perceived Self-Esteem

The current study examined the relationship between the severity and acceptance of health conditions and perceived self-worth. Previous research such as Wilson and Stock (2019) and Randi et al. (2020) have suggested that self-perceptions, mental health, and quality of life are impacted by diverse kinds of health conditions (Randi et al., 2020; Wilson & Stock, 2019). It was hypothesized that those with more severe health conditions will have lower perceived self-esteem and those with high illness acceptance will report higher self-esteem. The participants completed this online survey through a web-based participation pool which included four questionnaires measuring condition severity, illness acceptance, self-esteem, and demographic properties. There was no significant relationship between condition severity and self-esteem. Contrary to the initial prediction, there was a significant, inverse relationship between illness acceptance and self-esteem. This inverse relationship indicates that high illness acceptance is related to low self-esteem and low illness acceptance is related to high self-esteem. People with health conditions may benefit from separating themselves from their illness rather than accepting it. This research is extremely important in professions such as therapists, professors, and healthcare workers in order to better understand this population and care for them properly.

Mentor: Dr. Ciarocco

Marisa Spagnolo

The Effects of Pet Ownership on Sense of Loneliness and Overall Well-Being

This study investigated the relationship between overall life satisfaction/well-being and pet ownership. The study aimed to explore whether there is a correlation between owning pets and individuals' overall satisfaction with their lives as well as how these pets affect their lives all in all. To measure this, participants completed three online questionnaires consisting of pet questions, a loneliness scale, and an overall well-being scale. The following study was a correlational study with the predictor variable being

pet ownership. The outcome variable in the study was loneliness/overall life satisfaction with no manipulation check. Participants also provided demographic information regarding their gender, age, ethnicity, and if they own a pet or not. Overall, there was significance between pet owners and their sense of loneliness, and significance between one's overall life satisfaction and owning a pet.

Mentor: Dr. Mehrkam

Christian Schaefer

A Correlational Study of Introversion, Academic Performance, and Academic Motivation

This study examined the relationship between introversion, academic performance, and academic achievement. One hundred and nineteen college students took three surveys assessing their level of introversion, their academic achievement, and their academic performance (i.e., GPA). It was hypothesized that introversion and academic motivation would have a positive correlation. Contrary to the hypothesis, introversion and academic motivation have a significant negative correlation. It was also hypothesized that introversion and academic performance would be positively correlated. Contrary to the hypothesis, introversion and academic performance have a significant negative correlation. This means that the higher an individual's level of introversion, the lower their GPA and the lower their academic motivation. This data provides valuable insight into the strengths and weaknesses of both introverts and extroverts while also helping universities to better understand their student populations. This could potentially help universities to design a better curriculum to aid introverts and individuals who struggle with both academic performance and academic motivation.

Mentor: Dr. Ciarocco

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## Paper Session III

Great Hall Auditorium 11:45 AM – 12:45 PM

Moderator: Joseph G. Myers, President of Psi Chi

Pet Power: The Benefits of Pet Ownership, influence on Emotional Stability and Empathy

Christian Murillo

The present study explored the relationship between Pet Ownership and its influence on an individual's sense of empathy and their emotional stability. Eighty-nine undergraduates taken from a convenience sample of Monmouth University were asked to fill out the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire, Emotion Regulation Questionnaire, Toronto Empathy Questionnaire as well as asked to identify whether or not they were a pet owner. To which from the data collected using a correlation analysis it was noted that there was no significant correlation between pet ownership and individual's empathy nor emotional stability. Despite the scales having strong reliability in measuring the traits, the issue may lie in the lack of data collected from non-pet owners as there were many more individuals who were pet owners (85) than those who were non-pet owners (4). Future direction for this study or potential new studies could be to survey more participants and have a more representative sample for both groups.

Mentor: Dr. Mehrkam

Brianna Gordon

Has Society Shaped You as a Student?: How Socioeconomic Status impacts academic resilience and Feelings of Missed Academic Opportunity

This study evaluated the link between socioeconomic status and academic resilience along with the link between socioeconomic status and feelings of missed academic opportunity. A sample of 102 undergraduate students at Monmouth University completed a survey to help understand the links between these variables. This survey included the MacArthur Scale (Dorsa et al., 2019) to collect data on socioeconomic status, the ARS-30 (Cassidy, 2016) to collect data on academic resilience, and a

survey specifically made for this study to measure feelings of missed academic opportunity. Prior to the study it was hypothesized that there would be a negative correlation between socioeconomic status and academic resilience. In other words, as socioeconomic status decreased, academic resilience would increase. It was also hypothesized that there would be a negative correlation between socioeconomic status and feelings of missed academic opportunity. So, as socioeconomic status increased, there would be a decrease in feelings of missed academic opportunity. Although neither hypotheses were supported, knowledge about the effects of socioeconomic status on a student's undergraduate experience is crucial for providing necessary support. This study provides a platform for building future studies.

Mentor: Dr. Ciarocco

Eugene Hardy

There's More to Interracial Relationships

This study sought to evaluate interracial relationships and how different attitudes and identities may have a relationship with people's support for and willingness to form interracial relationships. Previous research investigates racial preferences based on attraction and on perceived masculinity and femininity (Aluelua-Toomey & Laisene 2023). Previous research also shows that individuals who take risks are more likely to identify themselves as feminists, as are people who are more open-minded. The current study wanted to combine these areas of previous research into one cohesive study to understand the relations among these concepts and interracial relationships. 104 students participated in a correlational study that sought to find out whether attitudes towards interracial relationships, risk-taking behavior, or feminist identity had any relations to participants' willingness to pursue or to support interracial relationships.

Mentor: Dr. Dinella

Regina McKnight

The Impact of Unfamiliar Speech Patterns: Patients' Perceptions of Healthcare Professionals

This study evaluated the patient's perceptions of trust as a result of a stuttering physician. Fifty participants listened to an audio file of a male physician stuttering or an audio file of the same male physician speaking normally. Both audio files included the same words and script, but with different speech conditions (stuttering vs non-stuttering). A Trust in Physicians Scale (Anderson & Dedrick, 1990) was utilized to record the effects as well as a demographics questionnaire. In addition, a manipulation check was included to measure speech clarity of the audio files presented to participants. However, patient perceptions of trust were not negatively affected by the stuttering audio file when compared to a non-stuttering physician, as the study's hypothesis inferred. This study indicates that other speech conditions may impact patients' perceptions of trust in future studies.

Mentor: Dr. Ciarocco

Brenaye Jones

Sick Time!

This study aims to determine what influences people's support (or lack thereof) for positive workplace policies regarding menstruation, including whether a worker's gender or diagnosis changes people's willingness to support granting time off from work. Using a multi-group factorial design, people were randomly assigned to one of four different experimental groups where they viewed a patient chart (man with influenza, woman with influenza, woman with Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder, and a patient without their gender or diagnosis identified). Participants rated support for the patient taking time off from work. Contrary to hypotheses, no significant main effect of patient gender, main effect of diagnosis, or interaction effect of patient gender and diagnosis was identified. Results can be interpreted in two ways: the limitations of the study should be addressed in expanded future research and employers may want to approach new policies given the lack of significant opposition to support seen previously.

Mentor: Dr. Lisa Dinella

Ariana Reyes-Connelly

The Impact of Presenter Identity on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Perceptions

This study examined the influence of in-group versus out-group bias on diversity, equity and inclusion workshops at a predominantly White institution. One hundred and twenty-six students participated in a 2x2 factorial design where they were randomly assigned a video workshop with either an ethnic minority or ethnic majority presenter. Participants were also categorized into ethnic minority or ethnic majority groups based on their answers to a demographic questionnaire. After viewing the video, participants were asked to answer an 18-item survey on their attitude towards the presentation. The survey was broken into two subscales, focusing on the workshop itself and the presenter. The significant main effect of presenter ethnic identity did have a significant effect on participant attitudes, while the significant main effect of participant ethnic identity and the interaction effect of participant and presenter ethnic identity were not significant. This means that the identity of the presenter is likely to have an effect on the audience's view of a DEI workshop. This is important for creating useful and educational workshops that have a real effect on the audience.

Mentor: Dr. Ciarocco

Sophia Cerminaro

Marvelous Women: A Content Analysis on Marvel Films and their Portrayal of Female Leads

This study investigates the portrayal of women in Marvel films, recognizing the significant impact media can have on adolescent girls and emerging adult women. It specifically examines themes of sexualization, sexual objectification, and harmful stereotypes, with a focus on differences in depictions between white and Black female leads. Analyzing three Marvel films, this content analysis reveals a significant presence of sexualization and sexual objectification in female leads. Notably, white women are more sexualized, while Black women are more sexually objectified. Although the 'Jezebel' and 'Sapphire' stereotypes were not prominent, the analysis shows that Black women are more frequently depicted as aggressive and hostile compared to their White counterparts.

Mentor: Dr. Dinella