

best research topics in psychology

best research topics in psychology serve as a crucial foundation for academic inquiry, clinical practice, and the advancement of mental health understanding. Psychology, a diverse and dynamic field, encompasses numerous sub-disciplines such as cognitive, developmental, clinical, social, and neuropsychology. Selecting the right topics for research enables scholars and practitioners to address pressing mental health issues, explore human behavior, and contribute to evidence-based interventions. This article explores a wide range of compelling and relevant topics that are highly sought after in contemporary psychological research. It highlights emerging trends, classic themes, and innovative areas that can inspire impactful studies. Additionally, the article includes categories of research topics tailored to different interests within psychology, helping researchers identify suitable areas for their academic or professional projects. Below is an organized overview of the main sections that will be covered.

- Cognitive Psychology Research Topics
- Developmental Psychology Topics
- Clinical and Abnormal Psychology Research Ideas
- Social Psychology Research Areas
- Neuropsychology and Biological Psychology Topics
- Emerging and Interdisciplinary Psychology Research Topics

Cognitive Psychology Research Topics

Cognitive psychology focuses on understanding mental processes such as perception, memory, problem-solving, and decision-making. Research in this area examines how people acquire, process, and store information. Cognitive psychology remains a vibrant field with numerous potential topics that address both theoretical and applied questions.

Memory and Learning Processes

Investigating the mechanisms of memory formation, retention, and retrieval is a fundamental aspect of cognitive psychology. Research topics may explore the differences between short-term and long-term memory, the effects of aging on memory, or strategies to improve learning efficiency.

Attention and Perception

Understanding how individuals selectively focus on specific stimuli while ignoring others is critical in cognitive psychology. Topics may include studies on divided attention, inattention blindness, or the

impact of multitasking on cognitive performance.

Decision-Making and Problem-Solving

This subfield explores how people make choices, weigh risks, and solve complex problems. Research can investigate heuristics and biases, the role of emotions in decision-making, or cognitive strategies employed in problem-solving scenarios.

- The impact of digital technology on attention span
- Neural correlates of working memory
- Cognitive load theory in educational settings
- Effects of sleep deprivation on cognitive functions
- Role of language in thought processes

Developmental Psychology Topics

Developmental psychology examines the psychological growth and changes that occur throughout the human lifespan. This field covers cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development from infancy through old age. Research topics in developmental psychology often focus on understanding how various factors influence growth and adaptation over time.

Child Development and Learning

Studies may focus on language acquisition, motor skill development, or the impact of parenting styles on emotional regulation in children. Understanding early childhood development has significant implications for education and intervention strategies.

Adolescent Psychological Changes

Adolescence is a critical period marked by rapid physical, emotional, and social changes. Research topics include identity formation, peer influence, risk-taking behaviors, and the development of mental health disorders during this stage.

Aging and Cognitive Decline

Research can explore how aging affects memory, attention, and problem-solving abilities, as well as strategies to promote healthy cognitive aging and prevent neurodegenerative diseases.

- The influence of socioeconomic status on child development
- Effects of early trauma on brain development
- Adolescent resilience and coping mechanisms
- Intervention techniques for developmental disorders
- Impact of technology use on youth psychological development

Clinical and Abnormal Psychology Research Ideas

Clinical and abnormal psychology focus on understanding, diagnosing, and treating mental disorders and psychological distress. Research in this area is essential for developing effective therapies and improving mental health outcomes.

Psychopathology and Mental Disorders

Topics include studying the etiology, symptoms, and progression of disorders such as depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Research often investigates biological, psychological, and environmental contributors.

Therapeutic Interventions and Treatment Efficacy

Research may assess the effectiveness of different therapeutic approaches, including cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), psychodynamic therapy, medication, or combined treatments. Evaluating new interventions and personalized treatment plans is a growing area.

Stress, Trauma, and Coping Mechanisms

Investigations into how individuals respond to stress and trauma, as well as the development of resilience and adaptive coping strategies, are vital topics within clinical psychology.

- Innovations in telepsychology and online therapy
- Genetic and environmental factors in mental illness
- Role of mindfulness and meditation in mental health
- Early detection and prevention of mental disorders
- Stigma and mental health: social implications

Social Psychology Research Areas

Social psychology studies how individuals think, feel, and behave in social contexts. This field covers topics related to social influence, group dynamics, interpersonal relationships, and attitudes.

Social Cognition and Perception

Research explores how people perceive others, form impressions, and make social judgments. Topics may include stereotypes, prejudice, and attribution theory.

Group Behavior and Social Influence

Studies on conformity, obedience, group decision-making, and social norms are central to understanding how social contexts influence individual behavior.

Interpersonal Relationships and Communication

Research can focus on friendship, romantic relationships, conflict resolution, and nonverbal communication, aiming to improve social functioning and relationship quality.

- Effects of social media on self-esteem and social comparison
- Psychological mechanisms behind persuasion and marketing
- Role of empathy in prosocial behavior
- Impact of cultural differences on social interactions
- Social isolation and its psychological consequences

Neuropsychology and Biological Psychology Topics

Neuropsychology investigates the relationship between brain function and behavior, while biological psychology examines the physiological bases of psychological processes. These areas offer rich research opportunities at the intersection of biology and psychology.

Brain-Behavior Relationships

Research explores how specific brain regions contribute to cognition, emotion, and behavior, often

using neuroimaging techniques like fMRI and EEG.

Neurodevelopmental and Neurodegenerative Disorders

Studies focus on conditions such as autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, Alzheimer's disease, and Parkinson's disease, aiming to understand underlying neural mechanisms and potential treatments.

Psychopharmacology and Neurotransmitters

Investigations into how drugs affect mood, cognition, and behavior through neurotransmitter systems are fundamental for developing pharmacological interventions.

- Impact of traumatic brain injury on cognitive functions
- Neural correlates of addiction and substance abuse
- Role of genetics in brain function and psychological traits
- Sleep and its effects on brain health
- Neuroplasticity and rehabilitation after brain damage

Emerging and Interdisciplinary Psychology Research Topics

The evolving landscape of psychological research includes interdisciplinary approaches that integrate technology, genetics, sociology, and other fields. Emerging topics reflect current societal challenges and technological advancements.

Psychology and Artificial Intelligence

Research in this area examines human-computer interaction, the psychological impact of AI, and the use of machine learning for mental health diagnostics and treatment.

Environmental and Ecopsychology

Topics focus on the psychological relationship between humans and the natural environment, including the effects of climate change anxiety and promoting sustainable behaviors.

Cultural and Cross-Cultural Psychology

Studies explore how cultural factors shape psychological processes, emphasizing the importance of diversity, inclusion, and culturally sensitive interventions.

- Virtual reality applications in psychological therapy
- Psychological impacts of pandemics and global crises
- Gene-environment interactions in mental health
- Role of psychology in organizational and workplace settings
- Ethical considerations in psychological research and practice

Frequently Asked Questions

What are some of the best research topics in psychology for 2024?

Some of the best research topics in psychology for 2024 include the psychological impact of social media, mental health effects of remote work, neuroplasticity and brain rehabilitation, the role of mindfulness in stress reduction, and the psychology of climate change behavior.

How can I choose a relevant research topic in psychology?

To choose a relevant research topic in psychology, consider current societal issues, recent scientific advancements, your personal interests, and gaps in existing literature. Reviewing recent journals and attending conferences can also help identify trending topics.

What are emerging areas of research in psychology?

Emerging areas include digital mental health interventions, the psychology of artificial intelligence, neurodiversity and inclusive education, the impact of pandemics on mental health, and cross-cultural studies of psychological resilience.

Why is studying the psychology of social media important?

Studying the psychology of social media is important because it influences behavior, self-esteem, social interactions, and mental health. Understanding these effects can help develop strategies to mitigate negative impacts and promote healthy usage.

What role does neuroplasticity play in psychological research topics?

Neuroplasticity plays a crucial role as it relates to the brain's ability to adapt and reorganize itself. Research in this area can lead to breakthroughs in treating brain injuries, mental health disorders, and enhancing learning processes.

Additional Resources

1. *Exploring Cognitive Biases: Understanding Human Decision-Making*

This book delves into the various cognitive biases that influence everyday decision-making processes. It provides an in-depth analysis of how these biases affect judgment, reasoning, and behavior. Researchers and students will find comprehensive reviews of experimental studies and practical implications for improving critical thinking.

2. *The Psychology of Social Media: Impact on Mental Health and Behavior*

Focusing on the intersection of technology and psychology, this book examines how social media platforms affect mental health and social behavior. It reviews current research on addiction, self-esteem, and social comparison. The text also discusses strategies for mitigating negative effects and promoting healthy online interactions.

3. *Neuroplasticity and Behavioral Change: New Frontiers in Psychological Research*

This volume explores the brain's ability to reorganize itself in response to experience and learning. It highlights recent findings in neuroplasticity and their implications for therapy and rehabilitation. The book is essential for understanding how behavioral interventions can lead to lasting change in the brain.

4. *Stress and Coping Mechanisms: Advances in Psychological Understanding*

Examining the complex relationship between stress and coping, this book reviews theoretical frameworks and empirical studies. It covers physiological, cognitive, and emotional aspects of stress responses. Readers will gain insight into effective coping strategies and their applications in clinical psychology.

5. *Child Development and Attachment Theory: Contemporary Research Perspectives*

This book provides a comprehensive overview of attachment theory and its role in child development. It discusses recent research on attachment styles, parental influence, and long-term psychological outcomes. The text is valuable for both researchers and practitioners interested in developmental psychology.

6. *Psychological Resilience: Factors and Interventions for Mental Well-Being*

Focusing on resilience, this book explores the traits and environmental factors that contribute to psychological strength. It reviews interventions designed to foster resilience in various populations, including trauma survivors and at-risk youth. The book emphasizes evidence-based approaches to enhancing mental health.

7. *The Role of Emotion Regulation in Psychological Disorders*

This book investigates how difficulties in regulating emotions contribute to the development and maintenance of psychological disorders. It synthesizes research on emotion regulation strategies and their effectiveness in treatment. Clinicians and researchers will find valuable insights into improving

therapeutic outcomes.

8. *Motivation and Behavior: Psychological Theories and Applications*

Covering classical and contemporary theories of motivation, this book examines what drives human behavior. It includes discussions on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, goal-setting, and self-determination. The text integrates research findings with practical applications in education, work, and therapy.

9. *Cognitive Development in Adolescence: Challenges and Research Advances*

This book addresses the cognitive changes that occur during adolescence, highlighting critical developmental milestones. It reviews studies on executive function, decision-making, and risk-taking behaviors. The book is an essential resource for understanding adolescent psychology and guiding future research.

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best research topics in psychology: The Psychology of Ageing Ian Stuart-Hamilton, 2012-05-15 This well-established text has been completely revised in this expanded fifth edition. Each chapter has been updated to reflect current thinking, and a new chapter on death, dying and bereavement has been added. This new edition is essential reading for all those working with older people, and a key text for students.

best research topics in psychology: Engaging Undergraduates in Publishable Research: Best Practices Traci A. Giuliano, Jeanine L. M. Skorinko, Marianne Fallon, 2019-11-20 Although many articles and books have been written about conducting research with undergraduates, there is a dearth of research on the process of publishing with undergraduates. Thus, in this research topic, we assembled a collection of 43 articles from 98 researchers worldwide who are passionate about—and have had success in—publishing high quality peer-reviewed journal articles with undergraduates. The diverse articles represent a wide range of practices to help researchers publish with undergraduates, including structuring the curriculum to promote undergraduate research and publication, optimizing research experiences for undergraduates, training students in implementing advanced techniques, accessing special populations, or conducting research in off-campus settings, addressing institutional and career challenges for faculty, and increasing inclusion and diversity. Each article provides a unique and diverse perspective that nevertheless resonates across contexts and situations. We hope that the ideas, models, techniques, and practices in these articles will motivate and inspire readers to begin, continue, or rethink how they engage undergraduates in

publishable research; we also hope to stimulate empirical and quantitative research on the effectiveness of these ideas, models, techniques, and practices.

best research topics in psychology: Psychology and Neuropsychology of Perception, Action, and Cognition in Early Life Silvio Ionta, Els Ortibus, Jane Elizabeth Aspell, 2022-04-04

best research topics in psychology: Research Methods for Social Psychology Dana S. Dunn, 2012-11-28 The 2nd edition of *Research Methods for Social Psychology* offers information on how to conduct empirical research in social psychology. The author teaches readers to think like experimental social psychologists, that is, to use or develop explanatory theories and to manipulate and measure variables in order to explain the origin or purpose of some aspect of social life. It provides information to perform research projects on human social behavior from start to finish, from selecting a research topic to collecting and analyzing data to writing up and the results using the American Psychological Association's required format (i.e., APA-style). Along the way, they will learn about the particular ethical issues social psychologists face, the logic of experimental design, alternative research approaches, sorting accuracy from error in research, and how to orally present their findings, among other issues. This book contains up-to-date scholarship and emphasizes active learning through pedagogical activities and exercises designed to help students design and execute their own social psychological research.

best research topics in psychology: Research Methods Ben Gorvine, Karl Rosengren, Lisa Stein, Kevin Biolsi, 2018 *Research Methods: From Theory to Practice* guides students through the entire research process—from choosing a research question and getting Institutional Review Board approval to presenting results at conferences and submitting work for peer review. KEY FEATURES *Provides students the practical skills needed to conduct their own research *Encourages critical thinking to help students become educated consumers of research presented in journal articles and the popular media *Considers the influence of rapidly changing technology on research methods, including statistical and neuroscience methods *Inside Research features personalize research by highlighting real-life examples of researchers working in a variety of fields *Media Matters features analyze and evaluate how a particular research study or general topic relevant to the chapter is portrayed in the media *Flowchart Figures present key concepts of the research process in a clear and simple visual overview

best research topics in psychology: Conducting Psychological Research Danijela|Bourne Serbic (Victoria), 2025

best research topics in psychology: Neuroimaging and Neuropsychology of Meditation States Barbara Tomasino, Franco Fabbro, 2017 Neurophysiological and psychological modifications induced by meditation practice have been consistently addressed by neuroscience. Training meditation practice induced plasticity (Barinaga, 2003; Knight, 2004), and as a consequence several benefit for mental and physical health (Davidson & McEwen, 2012), and cognitive performance. One goal of meditation is to achieve the light of consciousness observing with equanimity (the right distance) clouds of the mind wandering. This Frontiers Research Topic brings together studies from groups of authors whose research focus on neuropsychological systems involved in meditation demonstrating how meditation activates and can modify brain areas, cognitive mechanisms and well-being.

best research topics in psychology: Best Practices in Teaching Statistics and Research Methods in the Behavioral Sciences Dana S. Dunn, Randolph A. Smith, Bernard C. Beins, 2007-03-27 This book provides a showcase for best practices in teaching statistics and research methods in two- and four-year colleges and universities. A helpful resource for teaching introductory, intermediate, and advanced statistics and/or methods, the book features coverage of: ways to integrate these courses how to promote ethical conduct how to create writing intensive programs novel tools and activities to get students involved strategies for teaching online courses and computer applications guidance on how to create and maintain helpful web resources assessment advice to help demonstrate that students are learning tips on linking diversity to research methodology. This book appeals to veteran and novice educators and graduate students

who teach research methods and/or statistics in psychology and other behavioral sciences and serves as an excellent resource in related faculty workshops. Downloadable resources with activities that readers can customize is included.

best research topics in psychology: *Forensic Neuropsychology* Glenn J. Larrabee, 2011-12-06 With increasing frequency neuropsychologists are being asked to serve as experts in court cases where judgements must be made as to the cause of, and prognosis for brain diseases and injuries. This book describes the application of neuropsychology to legal issues in both the civil and criminal courts. It emphasizes a scientific basis of neuropsychology. All of the contributors are recognized as scientist-clinicians. The chapters cover common forensic issues such as appropriate scientific reasoning, the assessment of malingering, productive attorney-neuropsychologist interactions, and ethics. Also, covered are the determination of damages in personal injury litigation, including pediatric brain injury, mild, moderate, and severe traumatic brain injury in adults (with an introduction to life care planning); neurotoxic injury; and forensic assessment of medically unexplained symptoms. Civil competencies in the elderly persons with dementia are addressed a separate chapter, and two chapters deal with the assessment of competency and responsibility in criminal forensic neuropsychology. This volume will be an invaluable resource for neuropsychologists, attorneys, neurologists, clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, and their students and trainees.

best research topics in psychology: New Directions in Forensic Psychology: Applying Neuropsychology, Biomarkers and Technology in Assessment & Intervention Joan E. Van Horn, Josanne van Dongen, Yvonne H. A. Bouman, Märta Wallinius , Patrice Renaud, 2024-10-23 New trends in research, assessment and treatment are currently visible in the forensic field in three relatively separate areas: the use of neuropsychology, biomarkers, and wearables and VR-technology in forensic mental health. These areas individually can make a valuable contribution to improving forensic assessments and treatment but combined they might even have a greater impact. For example, heart rate variability (a biomarker) can be visualized during Virtual Reality (VR) scenarios to increase patients' insights into their physiological responses. With our topic 'New Directions in Forensic Psychology: Applying Neuropsychology, Biomarkers and Technology in Assessment and Intervention' we hope to offer more insight into the state of scientific developments in the aforementioned areas as they relate to forensic psychology. As a result, we hope to be able to pinpoint lacking knowledge and offer suggestions for further research.

best research topics in psychology: *Neuropsychology of Consciousness* Silvia Savazzi, Anna Maria Berti, Juha Silvanto, Cecilia Guariglia, 2019-11-05

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best research topics in psychology: *Risks of "Cyber-relationships" in Adolescents and Young People* Iratxe Redondo, Juan Manuel Machimbarrena, Joana Jaureguizar, Sebastian Wachs, 2023-02-17

best research topics in psychology: Visual Dysfunction in Schizophrenia: A View into the Mechanisms of Madness? Randolph Blake, Steven Silverstein, Brian P. Keane, Michael Green, Szabolcs Kéri, 2015-05-11 Research on visual perception in schizophrenia has a long history. However, it is only recently that it has been included in mainstream efforts to understand the cognitive neuroscience of the disorder and to assist with biomarker and treatment development (e.g., the NIMH CNTRICS and RDoC initiatives). Advances in our understanding of visual disturbances in schizophrenia can tell us about both specific computational and neurobiological abnormalities, and about the widespread computational and neurobiological abnormalities in the illness, of which visual disturbances constitute well-studied, replicable, low-level examples. Importantly, far from being a passive sensory registration process, visual perception is active, inferential, and hypothesis-generating, and therefore can provide excellent examples of breakdowns in general brain functions in schizophrenia. Despite progress made in understanding visual

processing disturbances in schizophrenia, many challenges exist and many unexplored areas are in need of examination. For example, the directional relationships between perceptual and cognitive disturbances (e.g., in attention, memory, executive function, predictive coding) remain unclear in many cases, as do links with symptoms, including visual hallucinations. The effect of specific visual disturbances on multisensory integration in schizophrenia has also not been explored. In addition, few studies of vision in schizophrenia have used naturalistic stimuli, including real-world objects, and almost no studies have examined processing during interaction with objects or visual exploration, which can provide important data on functioning of the perception for action pathway. Relatedly, studies of visual processing in schizophrenia have also not been conducted within contexts that include emotional stimulation and the presence of reinforcers – characteristics of many real-world situations – and the consequences of this are likely to be an incomplete view of how and when perception is abnormal in the condition. An additional important area involves treatment of visual disturbances in schizophrenia. Two major questions regarding this are: 1) can visual processing be improved in cases where it is impaired (and by what types of interventions affecting which cognitive and neurobiological mechanisms)? and 2) what are the clinical and functional benefits of improving specific visual functions in people with schizophrenia? Other important and understudied questions concern: 1) the extent to which indices of visual functioning can serve as biomarkers such as predictors of relapse, treatment response, and/or recovery; 2) the potential role of visual functioning in diagnosing and predicting illness; 3) the extent to which some visual perception disturbances are diagnostically specific to schizophrenia; and 4) the extent to which visual disturbances are truly manifestations of disease, as opposed to aspects of normal variation that, in combination with disease, serves to modify the clinical presentation. This Frontiers Research Topic explores some of these, and other issues facing this exciting interface between vision science and schizophrenia research. We include papers that span the entire range of different Frontiers paper types, including those that are data driven (using psychophysics, electroencephalography, neuroimaging, computational and animal models, and other methods), reviews, hypotheses, theories, opinion, methods, areas of impact, and historical perspectives.

best research topics in psychology: Sugar and Spice, and Everything Nice: Exploring Prosocial Development Through Infancy and Early Childhood Chris Moore, Markus Paulus, Amanda Williams, 2015-05-18 Prosocial behaviors such as sharing, helping, and comforting begin to emerge early in development. The presence of these prosocial behaviors is important not only in childhood, but throughout one's lifetime, as behaving prosocially is important for social functioning and maintaining social relationships. For many years researchers have been interested in how and when these behaviors develop, as well as how these behaviors are influenced by a variety of factors. Recently however, exciting new research has shown novel and surprising findings, particularly on the early development and ontogenetic origins of prosocial behavior. Research in this area is important, as by understanding what influences prosocial behavior, we may be better able to sustain and support the development of prosociality. Further, a richer understanding may help us to be better able to mediate factors that impede or negatively influence positive social behaviors, as well as negate triggers that may lead to negative social behaviors. Many theoretical views guide different streams of developmental research in this field. Here, we will bring together scholars from various theoretical backgrounds, to collectively explore the development of early prosocial behaviors from early infancy to early school aged children. Contributors will offer insights using a variety of methodologies, from various resource allocation paradigms derived from economist game theorists, to looking time paradigms and more. Together we seek to broadly explore questions pertaining to prosocial development, for example- at what age do prosocial behaviors, moral understanding, or social selectivity emerge? Contributors will individually address unique research questions across a spectrum of topics. For example, how prosocial behaviors are influenced by underlying mechanisms, such as moral emotions (e.g. guilt and sympathy), will be explored, as will how children's expectations may shape their behaviors, and how they come to care about others. Questions surrounding different contexts will also be investigated. For example, how does empathy influence

prosociality? Do children treat partners differently depending on their past behaviors, wealth, or other characteristics? Does whether there is a cost associated with behaving prosocially influence decision-making? By incorporating the work of numerous researchers in the field of prosocial development, who contribute comprehensive reviews of past research, unique theoretical perspectives and empirical approaches, the proposed research topic endeavors to provide new insights into a breadth of prosocial behaviors. In sum, the proposed research topic will contribute to our understanding of prosocial development in the early years by highlighting the relevant factors and contexts under which prosocial behavior emerges.

best research topics in psychology: The role of body and environment in cognition Dermot Lynott, Judith Holler, Louise Connell, 2014-08-25 Recent evidence has shown many ways in which our bodies and the environment influence cognition. In this Research Topic we aim to develop our understanding of cognition by considering the diverse and dynamic relationship between the language we use, our bodily perceptions, and our actions and interactions in the broader environment. There are already many empirical effects illustrating the continuity of mind-body-environment: manipulating body posture influences diverse areas such as mood, hormonal responses, and perception of risk; directing attention to a particular sensory modality can affect language processing, signal detection, and memory performance; placing implicit cues in the environment can impact upon social behaviours, moral judgements, and economic decision making. This Research Topic includes papers that explore the question of how our bodies and the environment influence cognition, such as how we mentally represent the world around us, understand language, reason about abstract concepts, make judgements and decisions, and interact with objects and other people. Contributions focus on empirical, theoretical, methodological or modelling issues as well as opinion pieces or contrasting perspectives. Topic areas include, perception and action, social cognition, emotion, language processing, modality-specific representations, spatial representations, gesture, atypical embodiment, perceptual simulation, cognitive modelling and perspectives on the future of embodiment.

best research topics in psychology: *Individual differences in associative learning* Robin A. Murphy, Rachel M. Msetfi, 2014-09-24 Theories of associative learning have a long history in advancing the psychological account of behavior via cognitive representation. There are many components and variations of associative theory but at the core is the idea that links or connections between stimuli or responses describe important aspects of our psychological experience. This Frontiers Topic considers how variations in association formation can be used to account for differences between people, elaborating the differences between males and females, differences over the life span, understanding of psychopathologies or even across cultural contexts. A recent volume on the application of learning theory to clinical psychology is one example of this emerging application (e.g., Hazelgrove & Hogarth, 2012). The task for students of learning has been the development, often with mathematically defined explanations, of the parameters and operators that determine the formation and strengths of associations. The ultimate goal is to explain how the acquired representations influence future behavior. This approach has recently been influential in the field of neuroscience where one such learning operator, the error correction principle, has unified the understanding of the conditions which facilitate neuron activation with the computational goals of the brain with properties of learning algorithms (e.g., Rescorla & Wagner, 1972). In this Frontiers Research Topic, we are interested in a similar but currently developing aspect to learning theory, which is the application of the associative model to our understanding of individual differences, including psychopathology. In general, learning theories are monolithic, the same theory applies to the rat and the human, and within people the same algorithm is applied to all individuals. If so this might be thought to suggest that there is little that learning theory can tell us about the how males and females differ, how we change over time or why someone develops schizophrenia for instance. However, these theories have wide scope for developing our understanding of when learning occurs and when it is interfered with, along with a variety of methods of predicting these differences. We received contributions from researchers studying

individual differences, including sex differences, age related changes and those using analog or clinical samples of personality and psychopathological disorders where the outcomes of the research bear directly on theories of associative learning. This Research Topic brings together researchers studying basic learning and conditioning processes but in which the basic emotional, attentional, pathological or more general physiological differences between groups of people are modeled using associative theory. This work involves varying stimulus properties and temporal relations or modeling the differences between groups.

best research topics in psychology: Audiovisual Speech Recognition: Correspondence between Brain and Behavior Nicholas Altieri, 2014-07-09 Perceptual processes mediating recognition, including the recognition of objects and spoken words, is inherently multisensory. This is true in spite of the fact that sensory inputs are segregated in early stages of neuro-sensory encoding. In face-to-face communication, for example, auditory information is processed in the cochlea, encoded in auditory sensory nerve, and processed in lower cortical areas. Eventually, these “sounds” are processed in higher cortical pathways such as the auditory cortex where it is perceived as speech. Likewise, visual information obtained from observing a talker’s articulators is encoded in lower visual pathways. Subsequently, this information undergoes processing in the visual cortex prior to the extraction of articulatory gestures in higher cortical areas associated with speech and language. As language perception unfolds, information garnered from visual articulators interacts with language processing in multiple brain regions. This occurs via visual projections to auditory, language, and multisensory brain regions. The association of auditory and visual speech signals makes the speech signal a highly “configural” percept. An important direction for the field is thus to provide ways to measure the extent to which visual speech information influences auditory processing, and likewise, assess how the unisensory components of the signal combine to form a configural/integrated percept. Numerous behavioral measures such as accuracy (e.g., percent correct, susceptibility to the “McGurk Effect”) and reaction time (RT) have been employed to assess multisensory integration ability in speech perception. On the other hand, neural based measures such as fMRI, EEG and MEG have been employed to examine the locus and or time-course of integration. The purpose of this Research Topic is to find converging behavioral and neural based assessments of audiovisual integration in speech perception. A further aim is to investigate speech recognition ability in normal hearing, hearing-impaired, and aging populations. As such, the purpose is to obtain neural measures from EEG as well as fMRI that shed light on the neural bases of multisensory processes, while connecting them to model based measures of reaction time and accuracy in the behavioral domain. In doing so, we endeavor to gain a more thorough description of the neural bases and mechanisms underlying integration in higher order processes such as speech and language recognition.

best research topics in psychology: Olfactory Consciousness across Disciplines Benjamin D. Young, 2015-03-05 Our sense of smell pervasively influences our most common behaviors and daily experience, yet little is known about olfactory consciousness. Over the past decade and a half research in both the fields of Consciousness Studies and Olfaction has blossomed, however, olfactory consciousness has received little to no attention. The olfactory systems unique anatomy, functional organization, sensory processes, and perceptual experiences offers a fecund area for exploring all aspects of consciousness, as well as a external perspective for re-examining the assumptions of contemporary theories of consciousness. It has even been suggested that the olfactory system may represent the minimal neuroanatomy that is required for conscious processing. Given the variegated nature of research on consciousness, we include original papers concerning the nature of olfactory consciousness. The scope of the special edition widely incorporates olfaction as it relates to Consciousness, Awareness, Attention, Phenomenal- or Access-Consciousness, and Qualia. Research concerning olfaction and cross-modal integration as it relates to conscious experience is also address. As the initial foray into this uncharted area of research, we include contributions from across all disciplines contributing to cognitive neuroscience, including neurobiology, neurology, psychology, philosophy, linguistics, and computer sciences. It is our hope that this Research Topic

will serve as the impetus for future interdisciplinary research on olfaction and consciousness.

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